

2541467

Registered provider: Barnardo Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This service is owned and managed by a charity. The home provides care and support for up to four children who can no longer live at home.

A new manager has recently been appointed and they are not yet registered with Ofsted.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the secretary of state, we suspended all routine inspection of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Ofsted last visited this service on 2 March 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. This report is published on its website.

Inspection dates: 28 to 29 April 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and the care and experiences of children are poor, and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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This is the home's first full inspection.		
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Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Impact risk assessments for children moving into the home are ineffective. They fail to consider the needs of the children already living in the home as well as the needs of the child moving in. A member of staff said that the recent placement of a younger child in the home had had a 'horrendous impact' on the other children.

Children raised their concerns with the inspector about the placement of such a young child in the home. The admission of this child without due care and attention has had a detrimental impact on the older children's emotional health and well-being.

Children who have lived here for some time said that they have a good relationship with the staff whom they know. However, they were not able to spend as much time with the staff due to the needs of the younger child. Children also said that the numerous staffing changes have left them feeling unsettled.

Healthcare plans are missing vital information regarding the children's medical needs. Issues around sleep problems, self-harm and the children's mental health are not effectively identified, resulting in there being delays in them receiving help and support.

One child said that they are unable to relax and watch television because of the negative impact of a child's behaviour. Another child said that it was unfair that they have to turn the television channel to meet the needs of younger children. Consequently, children are spending more time alone in their bedrooms.

All children have a school placement. Some are on restricted timetables, and one child is refusing to engage in education in the home. The manager and staff advocate well for children. They are working with the placing authority and virtual head to source an appropriate school for one child.

However, there are no plans as to what children should be doing during the day to support their learning when they are not in education. One child said that they stay in their bedroom as there is nothing to do, while others sit in the lounge area watching the television. This does not help children to prepare for learning and the reintegration to school.

Children are able to remain in contact with their families. Staff ensure that the children have the opportunities to talk to their families and to meet with them once the COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions are lifted.

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

Risk management plans are not effective. This is because they fail to identify all the known risks and the action to be taken to reduce them. This places children at risk of harm.

Following a serious safeguarding incident, the manager and staff revised the supervision protocols. Consequently, staff are checking the children every 30 to 60 minutes during the day and evening. This blanket approach to risk management has not been assessed against the needs of each child and is having a detrimental impact on the children's emotional health and well-being. The children said that this level of supervision is intrusive and is having an impact on their ability to settle at night, as the staff frequently come into their rooms.

Children said that they do not always feel safe in the home. This is because of the behaviours of one child, which has included assaults on the staff and children. Following one serious incident, a child was unable to attend school for four days because their glasses were broken. Furthermore, one child who was happy and settled here has now asked to move.

There have been 11 physical interventions for the new child; on 19 April the child was held on three different occasions. It is evident that staff are unable to meet the needs of the child and keep them and the other children safe.

Children said that they are asked by staff to go to their rooms and lock their doors when other children are struggling. While they understand the reasons for this, they do not think it is fair. One child said that they are unable to relax because of the impact of one child's behaviour. Another said that they are not able to get to sleep at night, which means that they are going into school tired.

The incidents of children being missing from the home have dramatically decreased. There were 101 incidents of children being missing since September 2020. This reduced to zero from January 2021. The reason for this decrease for one child is that they are no longer attending school. Staff have not considered what action is needed to prevent a reoccurrence of this behaviour when the child returns to school.

The home is generally well maintained and provides a warm and homely environment. Children have been instrumental in redesigning the dining room into another lounge. Children's privacy in their bedrooms is compromised due to the lack of appropriate window dressings. The lock on the laundry room door is inappropriate as a child was able to lock the staff in the room.

Fire drills are not routinely carried out when new children or staff arrive at the home. One child was unsure what to do if the fire alarm goes off. This places children and staff at the risk of harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The leadership and management of the home is ineffective. The home has been through a turbulent year, due to incidents of COVID-19 in the home, the lockdown restrictions and changes in management.

There have been three managers in the home since September 2020. A manager was appointed to the home but has now moved to another home in the organisation. A new manager has been appointed and is to apply to Ofsted for registration. Because of this instability, some managerial tasks, such as monitoring, have not been carried out to a good standard.

Monitoring of the home has failed to identify areas of concern. Consequently, the responsible individual has made changes to the person carrying out the independent monitoring of the home. Records and documentation are not current and do not reflect the needs of the children. Furthermore, incomplete records of physical interventions and consequences have been signed off by the manager.

Staffing during this period has been difficult due to a number of issues. As a result, 174 shifts were covered by seven staff members to provide a level of consistency for the children. This prevented the need to use temporary staff who would not know the children.

The processes for admitting children into the home are ineffective. The manager received a referral on 7 April 2021 for a younger child. The referral was considered and refused by the manager, as it did not meet the home's admissions criteria in the statement of purpose. The statement of purpose originally stated that the home can care for children from 10 years of age.

The manager was then instructed by the responsible individual to change the statement of purpose and admit the child. This decision failed to take into consideration the skills of the staff team or the needs of the other children. This has resulted in poor outcomes for all the children.

Social workers have commented on the negative impact that this placement has had on all the children living in the home. Unfortunately, because of the child's needs, an alternative placement has been sourced. This is a poor outcome for this child. The responsible individual has agreed that there will be a settling period for the children before any new placements are considered.

Record-keeping is not good. Records and documentation fail to show the depth of discussions held with children to identify the actions that need to be taken. The electronic recording system is not helpful in telling the story of the child's time in the home. This is because information is duplicated in several areas, which has led to inaccuracies and missing information in the records. This has been raised in previous reports and remains an issue.

Children know how to raise a concern. One child was supported well in raising their concerns about their placing authority. Staff ensured that the child had an independent advocate to support them throughout the process. However, staff have not detailed their actions in the complaints book. Similarly, there is not a clear audit trail of the actions taken by staff to address complaints made by parents. This does not promote transparency.

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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)) This requirement was issued at the last visit and is reinstated.	13 June 2021
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.	13 June 2021

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child’s relevant plans. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i))	
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; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child’s health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(d)) This requirement was issued at the last visit and is reinstated.	13 June 2021
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—	13 June 2021

lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; understand the impact that 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)(a)(b)(f)(h))	
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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))*	13 June 2021
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— ensure, by means of fire drills and practice at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to followed in the case of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(d))	13 June 2021
The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and	13 June 2021

are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)) This requirement was issued at the last visit and is reinstated.	
Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children. The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (1) (3))	13 June 2021
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— the name of the child; details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; 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 name of the person who used the measure (‘the user’), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so (‘the authorised person’)— has spoken to the user about the measure; and	13 June 2021

has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and 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 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(iv))	
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* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: 2541467

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Barnardo Services Limited

Registered provider address: Barnardo House, Tanners Lane, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex IG6 1QG

Responsible individual: Stuart Ainge

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Chris Scully, Social Care Inspector

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