

2593095

Registered provider: Barnardo's

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a national charity. It is registered to provide care for up to three children who have learning disabilities.

The home registered with Ofsted on 7 May 2020. The registered manager post has been vacant since 15 June 2021. On 31 January 2022, the current manager submitted an application to register with Ofsted.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 9 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 February 2022

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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Not previously inspected

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff have a clear understanding of children's starting points. Children in this home have cognitive abilities which are far younger than their chronological age. Staff work in partnership with professionals to promote and develop the well-being of children.

Children make progress in their education and health. Children have become more settled at school and have made improvements in their development. Staff support children through role modelling in order to understand health needs such as undertaking lateral flow tests and having to self-isolate during COVID-19. As a result, children's life chances are improved.

Staff and children have positive relationships. Staff use their knowledge of children to support them in achieving healthier and more appropriate behaviours. Key-work sessions support children's progress and help them to understand themselves. Children's individual cultural and identity needs are integral to the care they receive. This helps children to grow in confidence.

The time that children spend with their family is prioritised. In line with children's care plans, children see and speak with people who are important to them. Staff are sensitive to the complexities of family dynamics, and they support children with these feelings.

Staff offer children a wide range of opportunities. Children have individualised weekly planners in their bedrooms and in the lounge area. Activities cover children's interests as well as offering opportunities to be challenged and stimulated by new experiences.

Children live in a homely environment. Children's arts and crafts are displayed around the home. Pictures of trips and activities with staff and children are on shelves. Bookshelves are full of appropriate books and board games. There is evidence of children's personalities and interests on display in their bedrooms. Consequently, staff create a culture of positive regard and respect.

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

Leaders and managers ensure that staff are aware of children's needs. Clarification of referral information is sought when appropriate. Children's transitions into the home are child focused, and this strengthens relationships in the home.

Carers and professionals speak highly of the care and progress made by children. They also report that communication and information is given by staff in a timely and productive manner. Staff work in partnership with children's support system to improve children's life chances.

Management changes have occurred. This has led to some inconsistency in the quality of children's case files. Information that is considered for children to join the home is not clear for all children and has not been reviewed. Targeted sessions with some children on their behaviours has not occurred, although it has been discussed with them after incidents. Recording for all children is not of the same high standard, nor is it reviewed regularly or proactive in nature.

Staff use children's preferred communication styles to speak to children about their behaviours. When sanctions are used, they are appropriate. However, leaders and managers do not ensure that records consistently include details of what sanction is used, the timescale of the sanction or its effectiveness. This compromises leaders' and manager's monitoring and learning for staff.

There are clear and full rotas which differentiate between bank, agency and permanent staff. The manager ensures that staff do not work excessive hours, which allows staff to have the capacity to remain focused on children's needs.

Improvements and amendments have been made to the medication procedures to ensure children's safety.

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

The shared vision and planning of leaders and managers for the home is not fully embedded. A model of care is outlined in the statement of purpose that staff do not clearly understand and for which they are not fully trained. Although children receive good care and support from staff, the manner of care is not yet fully aligned with the statement of purpose.

Leaders and managers are not consistently proactive. Appropriate referrals are made to the local authority designated officer and managers conduct internal investigations where necessary. However, the local authority was not informed of a child moving into the home as required. The manager has not sought to work with a partner agency in order to improve their interactions and understanding of children with additional needs. There is good staff morale and the staff team feel supported. Due to COVID-19, there has been an increase in the use of agency staff to cover staff sickness or self-isolation. Agency staff who are familiar to the children are used, and they undertake an induction to the home. However, staff files do not fully provide evidence that new permanent staff undertake an induction to the home. Furthermore, regular annual performance reviews for longer term staff have not occurred. Access to all relevant employment references or full employment histories for agency and permanent staff is variable. Consequently, this does not ensure that staff are suitable to work with children, and it compromises children's safety.

Management oversight is not sufficiently thorough. Shift planners are not consistently completed. The admissions and discharge book does not always list children's addresses when they move in or out of the home. The workforce development plan does not detail

all required information. The manager has not yet completed the quality of care review that is due and plans to work on this. This will help managers to identify service strengths or highlight areas for improvement.

Staff have received training in the use of restraint. Staff understanding and relationships with children have meant that the use of restraints is rare. However, leaders and managers do not adequately respond by reviewing restraint techniques with staff when restraint has been used. Senior leaders are aware of this shortfall and have identified a 'train the trainer' course to allow for a staff member to provide regular restraint refresher training within the organisation.

There is variation on how the child's voice is documented. Children's files differ in how evidence of their involvement is recorded. Despite the overall progress one child has made, particularly in communication, their fire evacuation plan has not been updated to reflect this. This reduces children's ability to be active participants in their plans, progress and development.

Leaders and managers do not fully consider children's transitions into adulthood. Leaders and managers want to offer children the opportunity to remain in the home after they turn 18 years old. There are children nearing this age in the home, but appropriate exploration of the requirements and impact on the current service has not yet occurred despite social care and educational professionals confirming that this is a viable option. Potentially, this could lead to a period of instability for children and those making decisions about their ongoing care.

Although there is a 'resident's handbook', it does not specifically meet the needs of children who live in the home. Leaders and managers report that they plan to provide an additional handbook for children with different cognitive abilities. Children have access to an advocate. However, this information is not currently included in their handbook.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5(d)) This particularly refers to staff supporting partner agencies to understand children's behaviours.	1 March 2022
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— ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(i)) This particularly refers to ensuring that staff understand and are trained in the model of care outlined in the statement of purpose.	1 March 2022

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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) This particularly refers to ensuring that admissions and discharge logs and sanctions are properly detailed, shift planners are completed and staff inductions and performance reviews are complete.	1 March 2022
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 arrangements are in place to— plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iii)) This particularly refers to ensuring that there are clear and timely plans for children leaving the home into adult provisions.	1 March 2022
The registered person must notify, without delay, the local authority for the area in which the children's home is located of every admission of a child into the home and every discharge of a child from the home. (Regulation 41 (1))	1 March 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's guide is available in an accessible format and explained to each child to make sure they understand it. The children's guide should help children to understand how they can access advocacy support or independent advocacy if eligible. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.21 and 4.22)
- The registered person should ensure that restraint practice should be regularly reviewed and refreshed, particularly when restraints are rare. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- The registered person should ensure that details of all sanctions and staff learning from sanctions are clearly documented. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- The registered person should ensure that they consistently demonstrate how they have fully considered the impact that new placements will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

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: 2593095

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Barnardo's

Registered provider address: Barnardos, Tanners Lane, Barkingside, Ilford IG6 1QG

Responsible individual: Kathryn Uche

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Tolulope Sawyerr, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022