

2677723

Registered provider: London Borough of Barnet

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides therapeutic residential care for up to six children between the ages of 11 and 16 years.

The home and the manager registered with Ofsted in June 2022. The manager is suitably qualified.

At the time of this inspection, there were three children living in the home.

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 October 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 23 August 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/08/2023	Full	Good
25/01/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have positive relationships with staff in the home. Staff know children well and speak with warmth about them and the progress they are making. One child said, 'Staff are really nice and want to help.' There is a stable team of permanent staff. The consistency of staff helps to create a family atmosphere in the home and enables children to develop relationships with the people who care for them. As a result, children develop a sense of security and belonging, which supports them to make good progress.

Staff ensure that children's views are heard. There are regular house meetings which cover a range of topics, and children contribute well. Children are actively encouraged to contribute their views about their home. In key-worker sessions, they are supported to share their feelings about their care and discuss their personal targets. The home's clinical practitioner has introduced a role for children as 'youth consultants.' This empowers children by involving them in decisions about the home, recruitment of staff and advocating for other children. The youth consultant has successfully advocated for the children to have more activities. This helps children to feel that they are listened to and that they are able to make decisions about their lives.

Staff understand the importance of children's relationships with their families. They support children to have family time, in the home and in the community. Feedback from social workers and other professionals is positive. One professional said, 'Staff are very sensitive to a child's needs and their relationship with their family.'

Managers and staff understand children's health needs well. Managers advocate for children when necessary, and staff are proactive in encouraging children to engage in their health appointments.

Children live in a spacious, bright, and well-maintained home. The home has a gym, therapy room and library, which provide opportunities to do enjoyable activities in the home. However, the garden requires some maintenance to ensure that it is safe and usable for children.

Staff know children's individual interests and encourage children to pursue them. For example, one child loves art and was provided with materials to create pictures, while another child attends a weekend martial arts class. This helps children to feel valued and to have enjoyable experiences.

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

Children are safeguarded and their risks are well understood by staff. Risk assessments are effective and kept up to date and clearly outline triggers and strategies for staff to de-escalate situations. Children receive rewards to encourage positive behaviours. Physical interventions are proportionate and well managed by appropriately trained staff.

One child has had a significant reduction in incidents, which reflects the progress they have made since living in the home.

Searches of children's bedrooms are appropriately carried out when there is a risk to children. Staff are sensitive to children's needs in doing this. One child was able to hand over items of concern and talk to staff about the incident. This demonstrates children's ability to trust staff and talk about their feelings.

When children are missing from the home, staff take appropriate action. Staff are proactive in looking for them and following the missing protocol. Children are welcomed back when they return, and a staff member meets with them to understand why they went missing.

Leaders and managers respond quickly and effectively to issues. On one occasion when there was a medication error, the registered manager responded robustly to ensure that the child was safe. They also introduced a new two-person recording system to reduce any future risk.

Allegations against staff are managed appropriately and safeguarding partners are notified promptly. However, not all staff demonstrate good knowledge of the policies and procedures relating to whistle-blowing.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is well managed by an experienced registered manager and there is a low turnover of permanent staff. Staffing levels are appropriate, and the team works collaboratively in their approach to supporting children. Additional agency staff are safely recruited, with all the relevant checks and training in place before they start work. This ensures that suitable people work with children.

Leaders and managers work proactively with other agencies and children's families. They take on board feedback from stakeholders and respond quickly when required. Feedback from placing social workers and parents is positive. This demonstrates that children receive well-rounded and consistent care.

Staff at the home feel well supported by leaders and managers. There have been some challenging incidents, but the staff team has remained committed to supporting the children. Staff receive regular supervision. Supervision sessions are reflective, offer staff support and guidance and consider the needs and progress of children. However, staff do not receive regular appraisals to assess their performance.

The registered manager is committed to staff's ongoing practice development. Team meetings take place regularly and provide opportunities for staff to reflect on what does and does not work well. They include input from a clinical practitioner that helps staff to develop their understanding of how trauma can impact on children's presentation and behaviour. This helps the staff to develop their skills in caring for children in the home and improves outcomes for children.

The registered manager carefully considers the mix of children and the impact of new children moving into the home, taking into account the needs of the children already living there. Detailed risk assessments are completed that align with the placing local authority plans, and additional staff training is provided where required. As a result, children settle in the home and build positive relationships with other children and staff.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 61, paragraph 13.5)
- The registered person should ensure that, in order for the children's home to be a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of children, they maintain the back garden area so that it is a more user-friendly space and ensure that any hazards are removed promptly. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's internal whistle-blowing procedures. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 53, paragraph 10.9)

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: 2677723

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: London Borough of Barnet

Registered provider address: London Borough of Barnet, 2 Bristol Avenue, London NW9 4EW

Responsible individual: Owen Chiguvare

Registered manager: Sophia Nzenwa

Inspectors

Jo Mitchell, Social Care Inspector
Dorothy Thompstone, Social Care Inspector

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