

2711552

Registered provider: Birmingham Children's Trust Community Interest Company

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by Birmingham Children's Trust as part of the local authority and has been registered since December 2022. The home provides care for up to three children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager holds a level 5 qualification.

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 May 2023

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people 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: none

Recent inspection history

Not previously inspected

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

The inadequate leadership and management in this home have compromised children's safety and had a negative impact on children's experiences and progress.

This home was registered in December 2022. Prior to registration, three children were already living in the home. Two of those children have now moved out.

During the inspection, the one remaining child told the inspector that they liked living in the home. However, at times, they feel frustrated by the inconsistent responses and care they receive from the staff.

The child's health needs are not being consistently met by the staff. For example, since moving to the home, the child has put on a significant amount of weight. Staff have failed to provide the child with any guidance around maintaining a healthy lifestyle. This means that the child has not received the appropriate support required.

Despite the child living in the home for six months, there have been delays in the child's written plans being obtained from their placing authority. As a result, the child's placement plan does not contain up-to-date information relating to their care. This means that staff are not provided with guidance to ensure that they can provide care that meets the child's needs.

The child is not being prepared for independence. The staff have not supported them to learn skills such as budgeting, cleaning and cooking. This means that the child is not yet ready for the next stage of their life.

The registered manager does not make sure that the child feels listened to and understood. When the child's views are shared and recorded, the registered manager does not respond to the child. This means that the child may feel that their opinions are not valued.

The child has been encouraged to try out new experiences that support their interests. For example, they have attended music concerts and been on a holiday abroad. The child told the inspectors that they really enjoyed their holiday.

The child attends full-time education and is making good progress. They are currently sitting their GCSEs and have secured a place at a college. Staff have been supportive of the child's engagement in education.

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

Safeguarding arrangements in the home to protect children are ineffective. For example, a child who no longer lives at the home had self-harmed and was able to leave and go missing from the home. Staff's response to this incident was ineffective and lacked the urgency required. The child was missing from the home for two days. During this time, staff demonstrated a lack of professional curiosity or sufficient care to ensure that the child was located swiftly and returned home.

Since the home was registered in December 2022, there have been a high number of missing-from-home incidents. When incidents have occurred, the staff have not followed agreed missing-from-home protocols. Furthermore, staff do not keep detailed records to reflect the action taken when children have been missing. On their return, staff do not have regular discussions with children about the risks and dangers involved in them going missing.

When incidents occur, staff do not make a clear or detailed record of what happened. The registered manager has not identified this shortfall in staff practice. The poor quality of staff recording reduces the manager's ability to assess staff's actions and to make improvements.

Staff only use physical restraint when it is necessary to safeguard children and others. However, following the use of a physical intervention, children are not always spoken to or given the opportunity to talk about what happened. This is a missed opportunity for children's wishes and feelings to be heard and to discuss with the child why a physical intervention was needed.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that recruitment practices are safe and robust. For example, references have not been verified and gaps in employment history have not been fully explored. This has the potential to place children at risk from unsuitable staff being recruited.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The leadership and management of the home are ineffective and this is having a detrimental impact on the safety and welfare of children.

The registered manager and responsible individual do not regularly monitor, review and evaluate the care children receive. Because of this, they have failed to identify shortfalls in staff practice or take appropriate action to ensure that children are safe and well cared for. This has led to significant failings in relation to the protection of children.

Since the home's registration, several staff have left. This means that there are not always enough staff to keep children safe and meet their complex needs. Although the reduction in the number of children has helped alleviate this issue, agency staff continue to be used on a regular basis.

Not all staff have the skills and experience to meet children's needs. Some staff have not received training in self-harm, child sexual exploitation and missing from care. Staff's responses to these risks have therefore been poor. For one child with self-harming behaviours, leaders and managers have not ensured that staff fully understand the risks or the strategies to reduce those risks. These shortfalls impact on children's safety, experiences and well-being.

The registered manager has not assessed staff knowledge to ensure that they have the skills to keep children safe. This is because supervision sessions carried out with staff lack reflection. Also, the manager fails to test out staff's knowledge and understanding of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. As a result, staff do not have adequate guidance to support them in keeping children safe.

Despite the shortfalls identified during the inspection, children's social workers provided a positive assessment of the care provided in the home.

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 health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(c)) This specifically relates to staff ensuring that children are supported to lead a healthy lifestyle.	13 July 2023
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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)) This specifically relates to staff understanding and implementing children's risk assessments, staff's monitoring and supervision of children and their role in keeping children safe.	13 July 2023

*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— 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 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)(b) (2)(c)(f)(h))	13 July 2023
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; if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). (3) The requirements are that— full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(d)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that staff are safely recruited.	13 July 2023
The registered person must ensure that— within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record	13 July 2023

confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure (Regulation 35 (3)(c)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that debriefs are carried out with children and that these are recorded.	
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. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)) This specifically relates to children having up-to-date records that are reflective of their needs.	13 July 2023

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that children are consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards' page 22 paragraph 4.13)

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: 2711552

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Birmingham Children's Trust Community Interest Company

Registered provider address: Birmingham Children's Trust, Third Floor Zone 16,
1 Lancaster Circus, Birmingham B4 7DJ

Responsible individual: Melanie Page

Registered manager: Samuel Walker

Inspectors

Lydia Isaac, Social Care Inspector

Jas Nahar, Social Care Inspector

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