

SC008484

Registered provider: Brookfield House

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The children's home is run by a private company. It provides care and accommodation for up to six young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The home is managed by a registered manager who is qualified at NVQ level 4. The registered manager has been in post since February 2015.

Inspection dates: 18 to 19 June 2019

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: 23 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/10/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/11/2017	Full	Good
13/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/10/2016	Full	Good

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 involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a))	30/09/2019
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— take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(vi)) With particular reference to the quality of key-work sessions, and ensuring that they help children to manage risks.	30/09/2019
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— 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(f))	30/09/2019

Recommendations

- Children should be provided with appropriate furniture, such as a lockable cabinet, drawers and wardrobe. Damaged items should be replaced or fixed quickly. Children should be given a choice about how their personal space is decorated in accordance with regulation 7(2)(a)(i). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.19)
- The Statement of Purpose is of particular importance to this standard (regulation 6(2)(a) and (b)(i)). Homes are required to develop and keep under review a "Statement of Purpose" (regulation 16 and schedule 1). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5). With particular reference to ensuring that only accurate information is included so as not to be misleading to the reader.
- The registered person should support staff to be ambitious for every child in the home and to gain skills and experience that enable them to actively support each child to achieve their potential. To ensure that staff understand and can meet each child's needs, in line with their responsibilities, the registered person themselves will need to have a high level of understanding of the needs of the children in their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.5)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. 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, paragraph 14.4)
- Children's homes staff should seek to identify and provide appropriate opportunities for children to develop themselves in accordance with their wishes and feelings and as part of the home's plan for their care. Each child's talents and interests should be understood and nurtured, with children selecting activities based on their personal preferences and abilities, so far as is reasonable. Staff should also support children to try activities that are 'new' for them, where appropriate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.4)
- Effective care planning and strong working relationships between the staff of the home and the placing authority are essential to the success of placements. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations', page 56, paragraph 11.2)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Generally, young people make good progress in many areas of their lives. Some young people are involved in a range of stimulating activities, and this has helped to widen their social and emotional experience. One young person is now very good at horse-riding, having had regular lessons for some years. This young person is also attending a community music group. This opportunity has helped the young person to pursue his personal interest in music and develop his skills in writing music and playing the piano. However, staff need to be consistent in their approach and ensure that all young people can pursue their own hobby or interest. For example, one young person has a love for animals and he would benefit from doing an activity that relates directly to animal welfare. This would help the young person to care for and protect vulnerable creatures and also help to develop his emotional skills. The opportunity to pursue personal interests should be widely available to all the young people.

Young people live in a clean and tidy home, but the decoration throughout the home lacks a 'homely' feel. Young people have clean and tidy bedrooms; however, wardrobe and cupboard doors still need to be replaced. Young people have not been consulted about their choice of colours in the home or their bedrooms. While there is evidence of pictures and toys in the bedrooms, it is important that young people do have the opportunity to personalise their own space according to their own individual choice.

Young people make good progress in education. At the time of the inspection, three out of the four young people living in the home were attending full-time education and making really good progress. One young person will continue with education after GCSE exams, and this young person has also enrolled at the local college to start a course in autumn. Another young person has also made good progress and he hopes to transition to mainstream school. This is tremendous progress for this young person, and staff have arranged regular planning meetings with the school to ensure that the transition plan progresses smoothly.

Some young people present with significant childhood trauma and attachment difficulties. Although staff are not trained specifically in a therapeutic discipline, training is provided by a clinical psychologist. However, there is a lack of guidance for staff on how to manage presenting behaviours. One young person has struggled with his education and only attends school for a couple of hours each day due to heightened anxiety levels, and there is no direct therapeutic support in place for him. This has led to slow progress in his emotional and psychological development.

Young people maintain healthy lifestyles. All young people are registered with, and have access to, local health services. Young people who require specialist medical intervention have a team of clinicians, working alongside staff, to support their day-to-day care. Staff ensure that all young people attend their medical appointments. Young people have a balanced and healthy diet and staff encourage them to taste a variety of foods.

Where possible, young people maintain good relationships with their friends and family, and staff help to facilitate contact. One young person has made positive progress from initial supervised contact arrangements to overnight stays with family. There is a plan to develop the off-site building into a contact room, so parents can come directly to the home if this is appropriate.

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

Since the last inspection, there has been a thorough review of policies and procedures by the manager. Some of these processes are still being developed and staff are adapting to the new protocols.

The format of the home's records for missing from care episodes has been redesigned and there is now a new document. This document provides a thorough and detailed recording of any incident. It includes a return interview that is carried out by a staff member when a young person comes home. The new format also includes a recording of the return interview carried out by the designated safeguarding officer from the police. There is a follow-up action plan with the young person. As this is a new recording system, the efficiency of the documents is yet to be tested.

In young people's case records, important information or contracts made with young people are sometimes handwritten by staff. Some of these recordings are difficult to read and staff need to ensure that recordings are easily accessible, and that notes are recorded clearly for young people and staff to read.

Incidents of restraint have reduced. The introduction of a restorative approach to manage challenging behaviours and sanctions has been adopted by staff. Should an incident occur, young people choose their own sanctions as part of the restorative interview and the incident is recorded and cross-referenced in the intervention record book.

The new restorative approach has been shared with the young people and this is recorded in the young person's personal development and welfare plan. This plan is designed so that young people and staff can identify triggers for disruptive and aggressive behaviours. It helps young people to identify what staff can do to help the young person at the time. One young person wrote, 'Take me somewhere for a drive or away from others so I can talk privately.'

Young people have access to the children's advocacy service and one young person has an independent visitor. The young person's social worker has identified the independent visitor to help the young person have a better understanding of their cultural heritage and to help promote a positive identity for the young person. Staff need to continue to support this work in the home and ensure that there is a consistent approach for each young person's personal development.

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

Since the last inspection, there has been a thorough review of policies and procedures by the manager and her deputy. During this review the manager has had a period of absence, which has meant that the implementation of new policies has been delayed. One staff member said, 'We spend a lot of time talking about stuff but sometimes things are not followed through.'

The home's statement of purpose sets out the quality and purpose of care of the home and details of the home's ethos. Inaccurate information relating to the home's recent inspection judgement could be misleading to the reader.

Individual daily logs and recordings of key-work sessions are often handwritten. While there is a section for action points, this section is often left blank and there is very little follow-up by staff. Therefore, it is difficult to evaluate if young people have a real understanding of why they might do something and how staff can help to support them.

Staff are implementing a new child sexual exploitation (CSE) risk assessment. This has been adapted since the last inspection to provide a more detailed and thorough assessment. Staff monitor and track the movements of young people and ensure that they are in regular contact with young people when they are in the community. Staff say they are more on top of recognising the risks. The current residents are not considered to be at high risk of CSE and this new process is yet to be fully tested.

The format of risk assessments has been redesigned but is not currently an active working document. It does, however, show a detailed and thorough risk assessment for each individual behaviour and how staff will manage risk to keep young people safe. There is evidence that risk assessments are not always signed by senior managers and, therefore, lack management oversight. Behaviour management plans are updated every three months unless there has been an incident that requires the document to be updated sooner.

The home completes three-monthly summary reports to track the progress of each young person. These reports are sent to placing authorities to update them on the progress that young people make. The reports are repetitive and provide very little evidence of progress as the same information is recorded each month. However,

daily logs do track behaviour and progress, but this information is not used to populate the three-monthly summaries. Without the updated information, it is difficult to establish a true picture of the progress that young people make.

After a young person's looked-after-child review meeting, there is a set of recommendations. An independent reviewing officer reported that it is sometimes difficult to know whether staff have completed the statutory recommendations following on from the meeting. It is important that a young person's care plan is progressed and that good working relationships are maintained with the placing authority.

Staff handover briefings after each shift lack content. The handovers focus on practical arrangements and do not record the emotional presentation of a young person, and how their mood may impact on staff and other young people during the day. A staff member said, 'Staff handovers lack structure and are inconsistent. It would be helpful to share how young people are feeling.'

The manager has reported no issues with staffing levels and the home has a full staff team to cover shifts. Temporary staff are encouraged to take up permanent roles in the home. All staff receive training and regular supervision which is used to inform practice in the home.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC008484

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Brookfield House

Responsible individual: Judith Power

Registered manager: Emma Ward

Inspector

Kamal Bhamra, social care inspector

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