

# SC013553

Registered provider: Bramley Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The children's home caters for children who have sexually harmful behaviours. Every child must agree to engage with the home's therapeutic services in order for them to come here. Education is provided at a school run by the organisation. Since 3 October 2019 there has been no registered manager.

**Inspection dates:** 12 to 13 November 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:** 22 November 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** improved effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 22/11/2018      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness          |
| 06/06/2018      | Full            | Good                            |
| 07/02/2018      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness          |
| 26/07/2017      | Full            | Requires improvement to be 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   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>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)(d))</p>                                                                                                                                                         | 06/01/2020 |
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(2)(h))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that monitoring and reviewing systems adequately identify areas that require improvement and ensure that adequate plans, including the home's development plan, demonstrate how these issues are being addressed.</p> | 06/01/2020 |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33(4)(a))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff are appropriately trained in the use of ligature cutters at all times.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 06/01/2020 |

### Recommendations

- 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)

In particular, the registered person should review the documentation staff use to comment on a child's needs during their assessment week. This is to ensure that staff comment on the appropriate areas of a child's needs that have been highlighted in the pre-placement assessment and referral documentation.

- Where there is a possibility that a child will run away or go missing from a children's home placement, their placement plan should include a strategy to minimise this risk. If the child is looked-after, their care plan (arranged by their placing authority) should include such a strategy. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.24)
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair, and the above principles as set out in 9.35 are respected. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

In particular, the registered person should ensure that any meetings to debrief staff after a restraint consider what could have been done differently. The conclusions and any actions identified should then be clearly recorded.

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, the registered person should ensure that the kitchen and dining areas are improved so that these are homely rather than institutional in appearance.

- As set out in regulations 31-33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

In particular, the registered person should review all of their recruitment documentation to ensure that this appropriately covers all information that they need to make a robust recruitment decision.

## **Inspection judgements**

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children are very positive about the relationships they develop with staff. They say that staff know them well and listen to them. Children report that they develop good relationships with the staff and that this supports them to grow and develop positively. Their views were supported by observations during this inspection.

Admissions procedures are well established and thorough. Children generally settle and make friends quickly, they engage in education and they are clear from the outset how the staff will support them. Staff also help the children already living in the home to make room for a new child and to make them feel welcome.

The assessment paperwork completed during a child's first week, however, does not clearly align to all of their needs and behaviours as identified in a children's referral or pre-placement assessment. For example, in one case the risk aggression towards female staff was identified in the admission's paperwork for one child. This risk was not noted as something to specifically assess during the assessment week. This decreases the potential for staff to make full use of information in order to inform decisions about how they can best meet a child's needs.

Children speak very positively about the support that they get from the home's therapists. Staff successfully find ways of helping children to overcome any anxieties that they may have about engaging with health professionals such as dentists.

Independence programmes are structured and clear. Children know how well they are doing and how the therapeutic programmes provided by the home are helping them to make progress. Children make good use of these programmes to help them develop insight into their behaviours and to learn coping skills. One child provided a long list of all of the things that he was able to do independently since coming to live here. His responses demonstrated that his personal views and preferences were considered effectively.

The staff team supports children's contact with family and friends effectively. Staff work well with others to ensure that children's wishes and feelings in relation to spending time with their families are carefully considered. Staff involve children in thinking about how to cope with emotional difficulties in relation to family relationships and this helps to ensure that children enjoy positive time with their families.

Children move on successfully. Written records with regard to how staff support children who are moving to another of the organisation's houses have improved. Further improvements are planned, for example to include clear evidence of what the staff consider should be the child's goals from when they change homes within the organisation.

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

Staff prioritise the safety and well-being of children. Children told the inspector about

how the staff have helped them to feel safer. They mentioned being able to have a better control and understanding of their emotions and how to be safer in the community.

Staff seldom need to use physical interventions to manage behaviour. However, on occasions when physical intervention has been used, the records do not show that sufficient attention is paid to reflect on practice and learn from incidents.

Staff know the procedures that they need to follow and the agencies that they must contact if they have a concern. They have a wide understanding of issues relating to safeguarding such as radicalisation and child sexual exploitation. This has resulted in staff being able to support children with a range of issues and to help them come to terms with past trauma and loss.

Behaviour is managed well. Children are extremely clear about what they have to do to gain rewards. The staff are attuned to children's individual risks and effectively defuse or avoid an escalation of behaviours. They use positive strategies to help children to reduce unhelpful or harmful behaviours.

Children report that sanctions are generally fair. Leaders are developing restorative practices in the home, but as yet these are not fully embedded in practice. Staff take time to talk to children about concerns and they involve them in finding solutions. There is a real community spirit here where children are enabled to be part of decisions and assist each other in developing safer behaviours. One young person who has lived here for some time commented that he feels proud because he is now able to help other children.

The number of times children go missing has generally been low. Where there has been an increase, staff have acted promptly and the numbers of missing incidents have reduced. Records of incidents show that a debriefing meeting with staff takes place. The records of missing incidents do not demonstrate that staff consider what they could have done differently. This reduces the potential to use learning from incidents to inform future practice.

Risk assessments are in place and generally identify children's needs and vulnerabilities. However, these lack specific detail of what action leaders and managers expect staff to follow to minimise and manage risks. In practice, staff know what actions they need to take to help children stay safe. However, the omission of information in risk assessments does not support appropriate levels of consistency, especially for newer staff.

Overall responsibility for recruitment has been given to one member of staff. This has increased the organisation's ability to recruit staff more quickly and to investigate and use a wider range of recruitment strategies. However, the organisation's reference request form lacks any question for the referee about an applicant's suitability to work with children. The form also fails to clarify that an employment reference must be obtained from the company that employed the applicant. The quality of records kept about interviews is minimal. A written conclusion about why interviewers consider an applicant is suitable or unsuitable is not always available. Other checks required to ensure that staff are of good character are carried out.

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

The quality of management monitoring and oversight of the quality of care provided to children requires improvement. Some areas of practice, such as how well staff are completing their relevant qualifications in acceptable timescales, are monitored well. Nonetheless, several health and safety issues had not been identified by staff to ensure that the premises remain safe and hygienic. This included, for instance, the cooker hood needing a deep clean, and the contents of the locked sharp knife store did not tally with the list of items it is said to contain. This was rectified during inspection. These omissions were not identified by the monthly independent visitor to the home.

Leaders and managers have a good vision for the service. The operation of the home reflects its statement of purpose and care practice has a clear focus on meeting children's needs.

Leaders and managers have not completed a written review of why two children's placements resulted in unplanned closures, although they did describe what they had considered. A full review would ensure wider learning to inform future practice.

A service development plan is in place, but this does not focus on all of the necessary areas. Some areas of the premises are homely and well maintained, but others are not. Leaders and managers are aware that the kitchen and its equipment are old and worn. They also acknowledged that the dining area furniture is functional and institutional. However, there are no written plans for these refurbishments in the current development plans. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that all the areas of the home are maintained to satisfactory standards and provide a homely environment for children.

There are now detailed records of staff training that have identified some gaps which are currently being rectified by the manager of the home. Records of staff training show that not all staff have received training in the use of ligature cutters. Cutters have not been used in some time and there is no process in place to ensure that staff know how to use them. When asked, a senior member of staff could not explain how the staff checked the integrity of blades or how staff were kept up to date on their use. This does not provide assurance that, if this equipment needs to be used in an emergency, the staff will know how to do so safely.

There have been several changes to staffing at the home. New recruitment procedures have been put in place which are having good results in finding staff, but no new members of staff have commenced work as yet. The numbers of staff on duty have been enough to meet the reduced numbers of children living here, and leaders and managers confirmed their intention to reduce the number of children in placement until they have recruited more permanent staff. Managers stated that the impact of fewer staff has had a toll on records being updated appropriately. Evidence at this inspection confirmed this and showed that leaders and managers have not ensured that children's records are not appropriately reviewed.

## **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:** SC013553

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Bramley Care Limited

**Registered provider address:** Nicholas House, Riverfront, Enfield, Essex EN1 3FG

**Responsible individual:** Kathy Dodd

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Ruth Coler, social care inspector

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