

SC013553

# Assurance visit

## Information about this children's home

The children's home caters for children with 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.

A manager has been in post since January 2020 and has applied to register with Ofsted.

**Visit dates:** 15 to 16 December 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 12 November 2019

**Previous inspection judgement:** Good

## Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Findings from the visit**

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

### **The care of children**

The staff have developed positive relationships with the children. They understand how to care for them and understand their needs. They made creative plans to occupy the children during the COVID-19 lockdowns. The children have enjoyed baking and movie nights, and local bike rides and walks during the restrictions.

The staff are mindful of the children's cultural needs. They ensure that the children are given choices, for example, one room is free from festive decorations to enable those who do not celebrate to have a space to relax in that is free from others' cultural decor.

At times, the children find the rules of the home challenging. Naturally, they would prefer more freedom, however, they understand that the restrictions keep them safe. A reviewing officer spoke positively about the clear boundaries and nurturing approach from the staff that help to provide a stable base from which the children can engage in the therapeutic support that is provided. However, not all sanctions offer the children a restorative way to make good their mistakes.

The children keep in touch with their families and important people in their lives. The staff have helped to facilitate video calls during times of restrictions to support the children to maintain relationships with families and key professionals. As a result, key meetings such as planned family time and reviews have continued.

### **The safety of children**

Safeguarding practice is variable. Not all allegations have been reported to the designated officer. In one instance, the staff failed to follow the organisation's safeguarding policy, resulting in an allegation that has not yet been investigated. Furthermore, learning from incidents is not used to inform and update the children's plans, or the home's location assessment.

The staff speak clearly about the children's risks and how to manage them. However, the behaviour management plans and risk assessments are weak. They do not reliably inform the staff of what the risks are, or the strategies to use should they arise. The behaviour management policy lacks clarity. As a result, it fails to provide the staff with clear information regarding behaviour management or the circumstances that may require the police to attend the home.

Physical interventions are used sparingly. However, the records fail to accurately reflect specific details about how the measures are used. As a result, there are gaps in records.

## Leaders and managers

A new manager joined the organisation in January 2020. She failed to register with Ofsted without delay. This was not revealed through the independent reports or addressed by the responsible individual for over six months. As a result, the home has been without a registered manager since November 2019.

The manager has developed a new team. New staff are positive about their induction and have taken part in online, rather than face-to-face training due to the restrictions during the COVID-19 lockdowns. The staff feel well supported by the manager and enjoy working with the children.

Managerial monitoring continues to be weak. The manager's monitoring report fails to include feedback from the children and key stakeholders and has resulted in a repeated requirement. The other previous requirements and one recommendation have been met. The independent reports are ineffective. They do not offer the level of scrutiny and challenge required to ensure good practice. Nor have they revealed the shortfalls highlighted at this inspection.

The organisation's response to COVID-19 has been thorough. Following advice from Public Health England the staff are wearing masks, gloves and aprons to reduce the risk of infection. Visitors to the home have their temperatures taken and take part in a risk assessment before being granted entry. These measures help to curb the risks of COVID-19.

## 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 staff—</p> <p>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;</p> | 31 January 2021 |

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| <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;<br/>that staff take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and<br/>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)(vii))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                         |
| <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>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.<br/>(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that monitoring and reviewing systems adequately identify areas that require attention and ensure that adequate plans, including the home's development plan, demonstrate how these issues are being addressed.</p> | <p>31 January 2021</p>  |
| <p>The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if—</p> <p>there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and</p> <p>the registered provider—<br/>is an organisation or a partnership;<br/>does not satisfy regulation 28; or<br/>is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home.</p> <p>If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of—<br/>the name of the person so appointed; and<br/>the date on which the appointment takes effect.<br/>(Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii) (2)(a)(b))</p>                                                                                                                          | <p>28 February 2021</p> |

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| <p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy (“the behaviour management policy”) which sets out—</p> <p>how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children’s home; and</p> <p>the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.</p> <p>The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it.<br/>(Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (2))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure the policy is clear about the circumstances that might require the police to be called to the home.</p> <p>Also, ensure that restraint records include details of which staff implement which parts of any restrictive measures used.</p>                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>31 January 2021</p> |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children’s home at least once each month.</p> <p>The independent person must produce a report about a visit (“the independent person’s report”) which sets out, in particular, the independent person’s opinion as to whether—</p> <p>children are effectively safeguarded; and</p> <p>the conduct of the home promotes children’s well-being.</p> <p>The independent person’s report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions.<br/>(Regulation 44 (1)(4)(a)(b) (5))</p> <p>Specifically, the independent person must demonstrate intrinsic knowledge of the regulations, and be able to identify effectively any shortfalls to enable the provider to take immediate and effective action.</p> | <p>31 January 2021</p> |
| <p>The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children (“a quality of care review”) at least once every 6 months.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>31 January 2021</p> |

the quality of care provided for children;

the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and

any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.

(Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c))

## Recommendations

- Regulation 19(2) details sanctions that are prohibited in behaviour management. Any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46-47, paragraph 9.38)

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** SC013553

**Registered provider:** Bramley Care Limited

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

**Responsible individual:** Kathleen Dodd

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Sarah Olliver, Social Care Inspector

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