

SC016600

Registered provider: Bridge Communities Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to care for five children who have emotional and social needs. At the time of the inspection, four children were living at the home.

There is a suitably qualified registered manager in post.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 September 2023

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: 13 September 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/09/2022	Full	Good
14/09/2021	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/05/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
30/12/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are well cared for in this home. They benefit from a committed and stable staff team who know them well. Staff rarely leave and the majority of staff have been employed for a number of years. This provides children with consistency and a commitment to giving them a family environment.

Staff have positive relationships with children. They work hard to build trusting relationships with children, to enable them to feel safe and well cared for. Staff are respectful, and they value the children, their views and their identity. Through listening to children, they adapt the support that they offer to them. This enables children to feel safe and well supported. Since being in the home, one child has made significant progress in being able to come out of her room and engage with staff.

Staff meet the needs of children well and when new needs are identified, staff change their approaches to meet these. Care plans and risk assessments reflect this. They have been well developed and contain relevant information about the children. Some records are written in a child-focused way, whereas others use more institutional language which children would find difficult to understand.

Four children have moved out since the previous inspection. One child moved on from this home at short notice and in an unplanned way. Managers have learned from this experience and have since been more thorough in their approaches to new children moving into the home. Detailed work was undertaken to prepare the child who moved into the home most recently. Managers and staff worked hard to make sure they had relevant information about the child before they moved in. The manager also considered the needs of the other children living in the home and how they would get along living together.

Staff have worked hard to develop positive working relationships with professionals and children's family members. There is good communication between staff and professionals. Social workers provided positive feedback about the friendly and professional way in which staff have worked with them.

The home environment is clean and well maintained. Children personalise their bedrooms and staff support children with this when needed. For example, one child who recently moved in had a new fluffy blanket and a shopping list for other items she would like. During this inspection, children were enjoying the outdoor space and helping staff to set up the barbecue for their evening meal.

Staff support children to maintain positive contact with their families and friends. They support children to attend meetings that are held about them and advocate for children when needed. When the manager has been concerned about the actions of other professionals, this has been addressed promptly.

Staff encourage children to be healthy. They provide healthy food for children to eat and encourage a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors observed home-cooked foods being prepared, which filled the kitchen with a lovely smell. Mealtimes are prepared in a way that encourages all children to eat well.

One child enjoys having horse-riding lessons. Staff encourage children to access support for their physical and mental health. When children have used vapes or substances, staff have had open conversations about this with them.

External professionals and families said children make progress in this home. Before the school summer holidays, one child was attending school regularly and another child successfully completed their GCSEs. However, during the holiday, managers and staff have not ensured that children have good routines and boundaries to prepare them for learning. Children are spending time in their bedrooms until the early afternoon and are not being prepared to access learning after the holidays.

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

Managers and staff have worked hard through a difficult period when children were unsettled. During this time, children's relationships with one another had deteriorated. Some serious incidents occurred, and while staff did not seek support from the police, the police did attend the home on some occasions. At the time of the inspection, staff had successfully supported children to feel more settled. The home was much calmer, and children were happy and friendly towards each other.

Children are kept safe in this home. Staff build positive relationships with children. This means that staff know children well and understand how to keep them safe. Staff work hard to de-escalate situations that arise between the children.

When safeguarding concerns are identified, they are reported promptly and in line with procedures. Staff talk to children openly about worries for their safety. There is good communication between staff and social workers, who receive regular updates about children. When incidents do occur, there is prompt communication with other agencies to resolve these issues.

Potential risks to children are considered and are well understood by staff. Managers keep risk assessments under constant review and update this information as needed. They change plans and strategies to respond to the changing needs of children. Risk assessments clearly identify risks and inform staff of what steps they need to take to keep children safe.

When children go missing, staff act promptly to look for them. They search the places they think children may be and talk to people the children know. Through important conversations with children, staff instil the importance of children keeping in touch with them should they go missing, and of how to stay safe. They liaise well with other agencies to try and find children. When one child was actively at risk of exploitation, staff were very proactive in getting the right support for this child. One

social worker commented that their child's episodes of going missing have significantly reduced since they moved into this home.

Staff have provided positive levels of support to children to help them to feel safe in the home. They have not used any physical interventions with children, an approach which is embedded in the home's ethos.

Staff talk to children openly about their behaviour and how to improve this. They encourage children to show empathy to others and teach them how to resolve conflict. When children talk to staff about situations they have found difficult, staff change their approaches to work positively with children.

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

Leaders and managers are suitably skilled and qualified. They offer consistency to children and staff as they have been in post for a number of years. Despite this, leaders are not developing their monitoring and review systems to ensure they are effective. This was identified at the previous inspection and remains a shortfall.

The registered manager finds it difficult to demonstrate the progress that children make. The responsible individual has identified a new way of evidencing this, however, this is in its infancy. Monitoring and review systems are not always effective in showing the action managers take to improve the quality of care. There is learning from serious incidents but the quality of this is varied and lacks consistency.

Not enough action is taken by managers to ensure children have positive daily routines. However, during the inspection, managers started to change this. Staff were given new strategies in an attempt to support children to get up earlier in the day. The registered manager started to take action to secure an education placement for one child who moved in recently.

The registered manager is willing and eager to learn and to develop the team's knowledge on important topics relevant to the children. For example, the manager has identified some learning and research in relation to the use of vapes by teenagers, but this needs to be further developed. Currently, the model of care as described in the statement of purpose is not fully embedded or used consistently.

The manager provides regular opportunities for staff to meet and discuss improvements to care and practice. Team meetings focus on some important aspects of children's lives and positive handover meetings take place. Staff enjoy working in this home, and say they receive good levels of training and support. However, two staff are out of timescales for achieving their level 3 qualification.

Managers work in partnership with people who are important to the children. They keep in regular contact with social workers and build positive working relationships with professionals and children's families. When managers are worried about

children, they have communicated their concerns to social workers promptly, to ensure that children remain safe. A social worker said, 'I receive weekly updates and am informed promptly of any safeguarding incidents. Since [name of child] has moved in, they have made massive progress.'

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, The 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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iv))	14 October 2023
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(v))	14 October 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 to aspire to their full 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(h)) In particular, ensure that managers are able to demonstrate the progress children make and improve their systems to monitor the quality of care.	14 October 2023
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Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff complete the relevant qualification within the specified time frame. ('Guide to the Children's Home's Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.12)

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: SC016600

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Bridge Communities Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 4, Enterprise Court, Downmill Road, Bracknell
RG12 1QS

Responsible individual: Joanne Scott

Registered manager: Sarah Womersley

Inspectors

Sarah Sheffield, Social Care Inspector
Nicola Lownds, Social Care Inspector

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