

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 operated by a small independent provider. It provides care and accommodation for up to five children who may experience emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager and registered individual have been in post since the provision registered in March 2007.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 4 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 30 December 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/12/2019	Full	Good
10/09/2019	Full	Inadequate
23/08/2018	Full	Good
29/11/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children are making progress. One child has made remarkable progress in horsemanship. She is extremely proud of her achievements, which are also recognised and celebrated by the staff. All the children are accessing some form of education. One child is working towards her exams. All children hold aspirations for their futures and staff promote these.

Leaders and managers recognise that staff need more help to better manage children's behaviour. In recent months, staff have found it difficult to support the complex behaviours some children have and ensure that they do not impact on one another. One child has been distancing themselves from the others and at times there is a tense atmosphere in the home. On two occasions, staff called the police to help them to deal with incidents. This does not give children the message that staff can manage. Leaders and managers have arranged for staff to have additional behaviour management training. This is scheduled to take place the day after this inspection. In addition, they have arranged urgent meetings with placing authorities to ensure there is an agreed and understood approach to care.

There is good evidence that children have important conversations with the staff. Some strong and trusting relationships have developed. Children are able to identify an adult who they can confide in and staff help them without question. For example, one child was worried about a personal health need and they managed this quickly and effectively. Another child wanted to reduce their medication, so staff arranged a review with the doctor without delay so that this could be explored.

Social workers report good communication from staff in respect of the day-to-day care of the children. They say they are fully informed of any incidents or concerns. Regular conversations and meetings take place to discuss these. Social workers report good collaborative working that helps them understand what is happening for children.

One family member told the inspector that they find the staff 'amazing' and that staff 'really do care about the children and are dedicated'. This dedication was also evidenced during discussions and consultations with staff.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Records in respect of medication require improvement. Several recording errors highlight discrepancies in the amount of medication stored. In addition, medication that children no longer need has not been dispensed of in a timely way. There is no evidence that this has had an impact on the children so far. Leaders took action to rectify the weaknesses during the inspection.

Most incidents of children going missing from home are managed effectively. There have been two incidents where staff could have done more to ensure children's early and safe return. There has been one occasion where a child received a consequence for going missing from care. This sits outside of good practice guidelines.

Independent return home conversations take place and managers are aware of the content. These interviews take place over the telephone; this requires review as government COVID-19 restrictions ease. If interviews are delayed, managers challenge the local authority. Information shared is used to try and reduce future risk of children going missing.

Two of the children spoken to say that they feel safe and are happy living here. They like the staff who care for them. They can identify an adult to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. Another child is unhappy and has a desire to move from the home to be nearer to family and friends. Delay in the local authority identifying a new placement has added to the child's unhappiness and subsequent behaviours in the home. Managers continue to have regular conversations with the local authority in respect of the placement move and advocate on behalf of the child.

The arrangements in place in respect of the COVID-19 pandemic are effective. Safety measures to reduce risks for the children and staff are robust. As a result, there have been no cases of infection at the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Managers have not addressed requirements made at the previous inspection. On two occasions, they have failed to notify Ofsted when a significant incident has occurred. Other key agencies are kept informed.

Despite managers being fully involved in the day-to-day running of the home, some records remain unclear. Records to ensure that staff understand how to care for children are weak. They remain cumbersome and contain institutionalised language. Staff are confused about what is expected of them. This is further compounded by placing authorities not providing clarity about how staff should respond to children's needs. Managers are taking action to rectify this.

Two of the children make regular complaints about their care. These issues were explored during the recent monitoring visit and this inspection. Despite a recent robust internal investigation in respect of confidentiality, this area of practice remains weak. One member of staff disclosed information about one child to another. This has left one child unhappy. Managers have not done enough to improve this area of practice.

Not all staff are provided with regular and meaningful supervision. This has resulted in staff not receiving the support needed following significant incidents. The lack of regular staff meetings prevents important and reflective discussions. This compounds some of the issues in respect of consistency. Despite this, staff report

that they feel supported by managers and that managers are always available to them and the children.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. (Regulation 6 (a)(b) (2)(b)(iv)(ix)) In particular, ensure childrens records are clear and provide staff with direction in respect of meetings children's needs. Ensure that children are cared for consistently and in line with their needs and that staff understand what is expected of them.	30 June 2021
In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— are provided with supervision and support to enable them to	30 June 2021

understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11 (2)(a)(x)) In particular, ensure that supervision is provided in line with the policy and staff's experiences and needs. Ensure that reflection and challenge is recorded and reviewed within records of these sessions.	
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; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(vi)) In particular, ensure that staff act when children are at risk or potential risk of harm. This includes when they are missing from home. Ensure that there are clear plans in place so that staff understand what to do when there are any concerns for children.	30 June 2021
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—	30 June 2021

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 work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(e)(g)(i)(ii)(h)) In particular, ensure that managers have full oversight and understanding of the day-to-day running of the home. Ensure that staff are provided with clear records that outline children's needs and what staff should do to meet these. Ensure that managers provide clear direction for staff in respect of expectations and hold staff to account when their practice falls short of those expectations. Ensure that any shortfalls in practice are recognised and that changes are made in a timely way to prevent reoccurrence.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)) In particular, ensure that children's plans are completed with placing authorities and that expectations are agreed, implemented and understood without delay.	30 June 2021
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home.	30 June 2021

(Regulation 23 (1))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b))	30 June 2021

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: 22 Lower Street Stroud GL5 2HT

Responsible individual: Joanne Scott

Registered manager: Sarah Womersley

Inspector

Tracey Ledder, Her Majesty's Inspector

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