

SC016600

Registered provider: Bridge Communities Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned by a private provider. It is registered for up to five children aged up to 18 who have experienced adverse childhood experiences that have led to associated trauma and presenting complex behaviours.

The manager has been in post since 2007.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 September 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 23 August 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/08/2018	Full	Good
29/11/2017	Full	Good
08/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
16/11/2016	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; if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a)(c)) In particular, the registered manager should ensure that consent is sought from placing authorities when significant changes occur to a young person's care plan, and should escalate any concerns they have regarding the drift in education plans for young people or about arrangements for young people frequently spending time away from the home.	04/11/2019
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; support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;	04/11/2019

understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment. (Regulation 8 (1) and (2) (a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) This is with specific reference to managers and staff ensuring that young people attend education, training or employment, and that any barriers to education are swiftly resolved.	
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans; take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child's health and well-being needs; (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) and (2)(a)(i)(iii)) In particular, managers and staff need to ensure that young people attend all routine and required health appointments, including statutory health assessments.	04/11/2019
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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account	04/11/2019

information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; 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; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (2)(a)(i)(iii)(vi)(vii)) In particular, ensure that managers and staff show professional curiosity when young people are away from the home and that all statutory safeguarding processes are followed.	
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 and ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) and (2)(c)(f)(h)) In particular, ensure that internal and external monitoring systems highlight shortfalls in the quality of care and safeguarding practice, and that records for mandatory and specialist training are in place.	04/11/2019
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(3)(d)) In particular, ensure that any gaps in employment history and reasons for leaving are verified.	04/11/2019
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant	04/11/19

person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	
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Recommendations

- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Significant shortfalls in leadership and management and failings in the guidance, protection and care provided to young people have resulted in a judgement of inadequate for this home.

The progress and experience of young people since the previous full inspection have been negatively affected by a lack of managerial oversight and the limited aspirations of staff for young people.

The young people living at this home are not attending education, employment or training. Young people are not being taught about the importance of education. They do not benefit from a consistent routine or experience the positive effects of education. For example, one young person who has been living at the home for almost a year has

repeatedly refused to attend education. Tutors arriving at the home have been turned away. Staff informed the inspector that the young person often spends most of the day in bed.

Staff and managers do not ensure that young people's health needs are met in line with their statutory care plans. Young people repeatedly refuse to attend routine health appointments. For example, four young people have been struck off dental waiting lists for nonattendance. Three young people have refused optician appointments. One young person has not had her eyes checked since 2016. One young person has refused to attend the GP for her required immunisations. Two young people have refused to engage with their statutory health assessments. Consequently, young people are not supported by staff to stay healthy and prioritise their well-being.

Since the previous inspection there has been a fire at this home. While staff ensured that all young people were safe from the fire, they did not respond effectively to the situation. The on-call system did not work effectively. Staff lacked proper oversight and support. This resulted in staff taking three young people to their home addresses without the consent of placing authorities. Managers did not complete a lessons learned evaluation to a good standard to highlight shortfalls and prevent the situation happening again.

Young people shared with the inspector that they like living at this home. Young people describe staff as kind and friendly. Young people like the food that is prepared for them by staff.

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

Young people's safety and welfare are not prioritised. Supervision records and meeting minutes highlight concerns about one young person's challenging behaviour and the negative impact this has on other young people living at the home. One young person who moved into the home over 18 months ago has only spent a third of her time sleeping at the home. Managers have not called for a review of her care plan or challenged the placing authority about their concerns.

One young person at significant risk of exploitation has spent two nights at hotels with an adult who posed a serious risk of harm to her. Staff knew her whereabouts and did not collect her or report her as missing. Staff failed to safeguard her and ensure her swift return home. Consequently, this lack of professional curiosity placed this young person at risk.

Since the previous inspection, managers have failed to notify Ofsted of serious events within required timescales. For example, two serious incidents were notified to Ofsted a month after they took place. Managers have failed to include significant information about the risks one young person was exposed to.

Since the previous inspection, a staff member failed to use the on-call system and share her concerns about the practice of a fellow staff member. A written referral to the

designated officer regarding this incident was not made within required timescales. The investigation into the staff member who was facing the allegation, and the disciplinary hearing, were not properly followed through by the responsible individual. Internal and external monitoring processes had not highlighted these serious system errors.

Staff and managers lack professional curiosity and the ability to work robustly with placing authorities to prioritise the welfare of young people. For example, staff do not always know where young people are staying. They do not check young people's sleeping arrangements or work with social workers to properly assess the potential risk of harm. Staff record young people as experiencing an 'unauthorised absence' and facilitate lifts to some addresses. Staff are not protecting young people, providing boundaries or acting as good parents.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leadership and management are weak. Managers have failed to review and monitor safeguarding incidents in the home to highlight shortfalls. Effective action has not been taken to ensure that staff prioritise young people's education and health. The lack of management oversight has had a significant impact on the decline in care in the home.

One requirement made at the previous inspection has been repeated. Managers are not giving effective challenge or following statutory processes to ensure that young people's education and health needs are met. Staff are not adequately raising concerns about young people's missing behaviours or ensuring that they are reported missing in line with procedure. Managers do not ensure that return home interviews are consistently carried out to learn from incidents.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that safer recruitment processes are robust enough. Reasons for leaving and gaps in employment history have not been properly explained or verified by managers on two staff files sampled during this inspection. Subsequently, young people are at risk of harm if recruitment processes do not ensure the safety of young people from adults caring for them.

During this inspection, managers could not provide up-to-date records for mandatory and specialist training. It was not possible to evaluate whether staff have received refresher training in fire safety as records were unavailable. Managers are not tracking mandatory staff training to ensure that it is completed in a timely manner, and to highlight shortfalls. Consequently, staff could lack the necessary skills and training to meet the needs of young people in their care.

Staff shared with the inspector that they enjoy working at this home. They did not raise any concerns or practice issue with regards to safeguarding young people.

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: SC016600

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Bridge Communities Limited

Registered provider address: Sutton Dipple, 8 Wheelwrights Corner, Cossack Square, Nailsworth, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL6 0DB

Responsible individual: Joanne Scott

Registered manager: Sarah Womersley

Inspector

Anna Gravelle, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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