

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 in the home.

The registered manager has been in post since March 2007.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 August 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 5 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/09/2023	Full	Good
13/09/2022	Full	Good
14/09/2021	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/05/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have trusting relationships with staff and their interactions are affectionate and playful. Children are comfortable in staff members' presence, and they actively seek staff out when they want to talk, need help or wish to participate in activities. Children are mostly happy with the care they receive and have the confidence to raise any issues with staff.

Children have made good progress from their individual starting points. For example, staff have helped one child to secure an apprenticeship at a nursery. They have supported another child to understand healthy behaviours and risk, resulting in reduced episodes of going missing. Staff helped another child to improve their mental well-being, resulting in reduced medication and self-harm.

Staff make good efforts to encourage children to participate in education and health appointments. They have meaningful conversations with children about these topics and take action to address any barriers. However, two children are not attending formal education or training. One child has disengaged from specific health appointments, despite this being in their best interests. Professionals and family members provided positive feedback about the efforts staff make to support children.

Staff help children to understand their rights and encourage them to share their views about topics that matter to them, for example seeing their brothers and sisters and having input about where they live in the future. When children feel unheard by professionals, staff help them to make complaints and appoint advocates.

Children are supported to spend time with people who matter to them, providing this is safe. Staff take children to visit their family and friends and also invite them to the home. When staff have reservations about children's safety, they raise this with social workers and jointly establish new plans with them.

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

Staff have a good understanding of children's lived experiences. Staff engage children in reflective conversations that help them to understand age-appropriate behaviour, expectations and keeping safe and healthy.

Children receive consistent care from staff and have particularly strong bonds with some team members. Consequently, children feel safe enough to tell staff when they are hurt, upset or confused. They seek staff's support when they have made mistakes. Due to staff's non-judgemental approach, children can express themselves freely and know that staff will respond with care, taking steps to ensure their well-being.

When incidents have occurred and staff have been concerned for children's safety, they have responded in an appropriate manner, for example trying to maintain telephone contact with children, searching for them and reaching out to their family and friends. Staff escalate concerns to the police and local authority, and they also take children to hospital when medical input is needed.

The registered manager and staff have responded proportionately to reports of bullying between the children. They have had individual conversations with them, reiterating boundaries and expectations. They have also supported one child to make a police complaint. The registered manager has kept social workers updated and continues to keep any concerns under review.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has a good understanding of the children's progress and needs. She challenges professionals when she observes them falling short of their duties. She also empowers children to use their voice by helping them to prepare for meetings with professionals. However, for one child there has been some drift regarding education that required more robust challenge.

The registered manager and responsible individual responded appropriately to concerns about one former staff member, consulting with the local authority and conducting internal investigations. This highlighted a pattern of concern and the individual no longer works in the home. They listened to the views of children and their families when reaching decisions.

The registered manager has taken learning on board from the previous inspection. She has established new recording and audit systems. Consequently, her footprint is clearly visible in most records, increasing her understanding of children's progress, the risks around them and the quality of care they receive. However, there is space for further improvement, for example critically reflecting on staff practice and sharing learning.

The registered manager has established a nurturing home where staff demonstrate that they value and care for children. Her nurturing approach is extended to staff, which means they feel supported to fulfil their roles and there is low staff turnover. This is beneficial to the children as they have opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with staff members.

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 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 the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(b)) In particular, ensure that children do not seek help from staff in moments of distress by texting and calling their personal telephone numbers.	27 September 2024
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. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)) This requirement was made previously and is repeated.	27 November 2024

Recommendations

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

- The registered person should ensure that the workforce plan includes any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home and is used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff, including the home's manager. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

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

Inspector

Tara Webb, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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