

SC025940

Registered provider: Barnardo's

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a children's charity. It is registered to provide care for up to six children who have a learning disability. The premises is wheelchair accessible; all children's bedrooms are situated on the ground floor. The types of placements offered include long-term placements, short breaks, and respite provisions. Care delivery incorporates the principles of social pedagogy. The manager started working at the home in May 2018 and is in the process of registering with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 31 May to 1 June 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

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

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

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: 26 July 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/07/2017	Full	Good
12/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
07/06/2016	Full	Good
12/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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 care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)) In particular, ensure all children have a care plan which addresses their individual needs.	01/08/2018
The enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills. In particular that standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— develop the child's interests and hobbies; participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child's interests and preferences. (Regulation 9 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii))	01/08/2018
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular that standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's educational targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally help a child who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access training and support throughout the period of non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(i)(v)(viii))	01/08/2018
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must take adequate precautions against the	01/08/2018

risk of fire. (Regulation 25) In particular, ensure that the automatic closing mechanism is working on the relevant doors.	
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made. (Regulation 35 (3))	01/08/2018
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in a children's home that— In particular, that standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. (Regulations 13 (2)(d)) In particular, ensure that care is effective and there is a clear shift plan.	01/08/2018

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9). In particular, the home must address the scuffed marks and holes in the walls, ensure that bedrooms do not smell of urine, make bathrooms less institutionalised and maintain the garden.
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5). In particular, ensure that risk assessments are appropriately updated and include risks associated with internet use.
- The registered person should seek to establish a diverse staff team with a range of interests, skills and experiences. They should lead staff to share those interests, skills and experiences with children to enrich the children's lives. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.6)

- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- Ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4). In particular, a child's admission date, heritage and musical preferences and any injury sustained must be accurately recorded.

Inspection judgements

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

Children fail to receive individualised care that meets their needs effectively. Staff do not have sufficient time to undertake their tasks or spend quality time with children. Although generally satisfied with the quality of care provided by the home, the feedback from parents and a child highlighted the need for more purposeful activities.

Care planning is unsatisfactory, as staff have not developed care plans for all children. This results in a lack of structure and focus on addressing each child's personalised needs. Although children are comfortable in their surroundings, they do not regularly engage in meaningful activities. An example of this is the lack of activities planned for the half-term holiday.

The majority of children are attending school. However, children who are not engaging in education fail to be suitably occupied with informal learning. There is no partnership working with schools to include shared educational targets or to provide a consistent approach to learning. Staff have no time to actively address educational needs.

Children contribute to decision making and there is a key-work system in place. Through participation in house meetings, children's views influence the menu choices, house rules and sanctions. Staff also prepare children for their statutory review meetings.

Where possible, children receive encouragement to develop their independence skills. Some children are able to prepare their own basic meals, tidy their rooms and take their personal items to the laundry. Children develop skills in other areas, an example being one child obtaining a cycling proficiency certificate.

Children generally interact positively with staff. Staff are good at facilitating supervised contact between children and their families. A parent highlighted that staff were 'friendly and helpful'. Staff have a sound understanding of parents' needs.

Children's health needs are attended to and a nutritious diet is promoted. Children have occasional physical activity, which includes going swimming, trampolining and cycling.

There is good promotion of religious needs. Children receive encouragement to pray, attend their place of worship and observe religious practices, for example fasting during Ramadan.

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

A parent described the home as a 'safe place'. Staff receive adequate training in safeguarding children, which includes raising their awareness of radicalisation and extremism. However, further improvements are needed to protect children and enhance children's welfare. These relate to fire safety, the environment and behaviour management records.

The organisation does not take adequate precautions against the risk of fire. The automatic closing mechanism on doors is not working. Children, however, receive protection from the regular checks of the fire equipment, alarm tests and fire drills.

There are plans to refurbish the home to provide a more pleasant domestic environment. The premises is fairly bare and the bathrooms are institutionalised. Although there are a few pictures on display, the overall décor is let down by the scuffed marks and holes in the walls. Two bedrooms also smelled of urine.

Apart from the lounge, there is limited communal space. The garden has play equipment and outdoor seating, which offers an additional area for children to enjoy. The lawn, however, is overgrown and items have been dumped at the back of the garden.

Some children have difficulty expressing their emotions. This can result in them harming others or damaging property. Sanction and restraint records do not detail the full extent of interventions, as seen in children's files. Incidents are difficult to monitor, as the home does not have a centralised recording system. This has a negative impact on monitoring and responding to trends and patterns.

The home has an adequate range of environmental risk assessments. However, children's risk assessments do not contain the full extent of concerns. Risk assessments are not routinely updated after incidents and there is no reference to children's internet use.

A parent praised the fact that the new manager is a behavioural specialist. The use of an incentive model has helped with teaching children expectations and consequences. There are plans to take a more proactive approach to understand children's triggers to assist with modifying how staff provide care.

Missing episodes have decreased due to the implementation of a plan to prevent unauthorised absences. Documentation confirms the safety of the fire and electrical equipment, electrical, gas and water supplies. There are good links to the safeguarding personnel and neighbourhood police, which further protects children.

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

The home has been through a challenging time, with the departure of two managers and several staff members. The new manager has been described by a staff member as 'refreshing'. He is highly experienced and strongly aware of the home's strengths and areas for development.

The remaining staff members are caring, committed and experienced. Vacancies are covered by agency staff. At times, there is an insufficient number of staff on duty, which impacts negatively on children's experiences. A parent, a child and staff highlighted the staffing problems. This was also observed during the inspection.

The staff team is culturally diverse, but predominately female. Currently, all the children permanently living at the home are male teenagers. Care does not meet children's needs effectively, as shifts do not have a clear structure. Staff do not have the time to enrich children's lives through sharing their interests, skills and experiences.

The home does not have a workforce plan, although staff do receive support from individual supervision, team meetings and appraisals. All permanent staff have obtained or are completing the required vocational qualification and there is an adequate range of additional training. The organisation has a learning and development team, which provides staff with the potential to receive uniquely tailored support.

Children's files are inconsistently maintained. There are examples of inaccurate information concerning a child's admission date, parental heritage and musical preferences. There was also an omission concerning how a child injured himself.

Of the three recommendations from the previous inspection, only one has been efficiently addressed. Children now receive better protection from the medication administration practices. The recommendation relating to risk assessments has been repeated.

Quality assurance includes adequate independent scrutiny, which complements internal monitoring. However, leaders and managers do not actively request feedback from children, parents and involved professionals. This is a lost opportunity to further enhance the development of the home's working practices.

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: SC025940

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Barnardo's

Registered provider address: Barnardos, Unit 13A Silver Fox Way, Cobalt Business Park, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE27 0QJ

Responsible individual: Suzanne Turner-Jones

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspector

Sharon Payne, social care inspector

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