

SC031504

Registered provider: Bristol City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a local authority. It is registered to provide a short-breaks service and longer-term care for up to six children who may have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities. At the time of the inspection, one child was living at the home for longer-term care, and one child was staying overnight.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2007.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

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: 18 May 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/05/2021	Full	Good
12/11/2019	Full	Good
04/12/2018	Full	Good
21/11/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are supported by dedicated staff who have the children's interests at the centre of their practice. The outcomes for children are good, and for some the outcomes have been exceptional. For example, the changes for one child have been so impactful that they have led to positive outcomes in all areas of their life.

Staff advocate well for children and support them to have their voices heard. Children are supported to use pictures and symbols to share their views and make choices, and staff liaise with the children's schools to ensure that they are using language and communication systems consistently. Each child has been supported to develop a poster about the things they like while staying at the home, and the staff team has reintroduced a newsletter so that families and children can hear about children's achievements and activities. These are celebrated throughout the home with photos and certificates, which are proudly on display.

Staff get to know the children and their families well, and actively seek support and advice from the range of professionals that support the children. Professionals and families speak highly of the staff and the positive relationships that they have.

Staff liaise well with children's schools and have been active in advocating for one child to have better access to education, learning and skills. One child has been supported to complete ASDAN modules and staff have also supported the child to successfully develop important life skills.

Staff are decorating the children's home to make it feel more homely. The child living in the home has been able to make choices about colours for his bedroom and the lounge. It is recognised that there are some limitations to the premises and how homely they can be, but staff are softening the space with wall stickers and bright, soft furnishings. Bedrooms are personalised in the short-breaks part of the home, and staff adjust the furniture, furnishings and toys available to meet each child's preferences. Staff are dedicated to make each child's visit comfortable and enjoyable. The organisation continues to enforce the use of health and safety stickers and fire signage, and this is detracting from the efforts by staff to make the premises more homely.

Children can use a range of outdoor spaces, including a trampoline and zip wire. However, the sensory garden and surrounding space are starting to appear tired.

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

Staff support children to improve their health and well-being. The outcomes for one child have been exceptional, and staff have supported them to prepare and eat a more varied and healthy diet. This has had a significant impact and has improved the child's health and well-being.

Staff understand the specific needs of each child well and are mindful of these when considering how to help children to get the most out of their stay. This has, however, resulted in a number of children visiting on their own. Staff are in the early stages of visiting schools and liaising with other professionals to put plans in place for children to start visiting with others soon.

Staff are well informed about the specific behavioural support needs for each child, and these are recorded in the children's behavioural support plans and risk assessments. These provide staff with guidance on how to safely support children.

The use of protective equipment by staff has been agreed for a small number of children. Staff are seen to use this as necessary, and practice is recorded in children's plans and agreed by families, carers and professionals. Staff use restraint as a last resort when other redirection and support techniques have failed to safeguard children and others from risk of harm. Records of incidents and restraints are well maintained, and are reviewed and monitored by leaders and managers. Learning from incidents is used to improve practice and support.

The manager and staff team have a strong working relationship with the consultant psychiatrist who provides advice and guidance to the team. Managers and staff describe this advice and guidance as being impactful for both staff and children. The psychiatrist is highly complimentary about the relationship he has with the team, and the high quality of the care and support that staff provide to the children and their families.

Staff work closely with children's social workers. There have been no allegations or concerns that have required referral to the designated officer. However, when safeguarding concerns were identified, these were shared with the placing local authority, and the manager followed these up to ensure that action was taken as required.

Families speak highly about the care and support provided by staff. They are confident that they could raise concerns. When they have raised concerns, they are satisfied that staff have taken action to resolve these. The complaints procedure is also available to children in symbol form.

Medication is brought to the home when children visit. There have been a small number of medication administration errors; however, action has been taken each time to ensure the well-being of children. The procedures for auditing and oversight have been amended and improved in response to these incidents.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a knowledgeable and experienced registered manager. Staff are dedicated and supportive of the manager and the wider team, and are committed to the children and families that they support. A manager has been appointed for the

team supporting children who stay at the home longer term. This will enable the registered manager to focus on the children staying for short breaks.

Staff are supported to complete relevant training and receive regular supervision. There are some staff vacancies and staff leave that have been covered by the wider staff team. A consistent team of agency staff form a permanent part of the team supporting children who live in the children's home. Staff work flexibly to cover vacant shifts for children staying for short breaks and for children who live in the home.

A new electronic recording system has been introduced. It is anticipated that this will enhance the records being kept at the home, and will allow for easier oversight, monitoring and auditing of records. At the time of the inspection, the transfer of records was still in progress, although these remain available in paper copy. Most staff are now using the electronic system instead of the paper-based records, although confidence in the system is variable as it is in the early stages of being embedded.

Leaders and managers have invested in technology that, when in place, will provide interactive screens to support communication and enjoyable activities for children staying at the home. There are also plans for the further development of rooms currently used as sensory or soft play spaces.

The manager has a detailed but realistic understanding of the strengths of the home and staff team, and areas for improvement for the day-to-day running of the home. While there is a development plan in place, which is due to be reviewed, the plan focuses mainly on the support and development of the staff team. It is evident that the team has a good focus on how to make the home a fun experience. However, the manager must now ensure that the auditing and monitoring of the home, and the plans to develop children's experiences at the home, are included so that the development plan is expanded to cover the development for the home and the service, and that the monitoring of the home is used more evaluatively.

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 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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) 2)(h)) In particular, leaders and managers should ensure that the auditing and monitoring of the home completed by the manager, and the plans to develop children's experiences at the home, are included in the development plan, so that it covers the development for the home and the service and not just the staff team. Leaders and managers should embed the use of the electronic recording system.	8 May 2023

Recommendations

- The registered person must comply with relevant health and safety legislations; however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. In particular, review the ongoing use of unnecessary signage. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC031504

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Bristol City Council

Registered provider address: City Hall, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TR

Responsible individual: Kate Markley

Registered manager: Valerie Mower

Inspector

Kerry Fell, Social Care Inspector

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