

SC031504

Registered provider: Bristol City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This short-break home is operated by a local authority. The home is registered to provide short-breaks and longer-term care for up to six children and young people at any one time. Children and young people who stay at this home may have a learning disability and/or a physical disability.

The registered manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2007.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 November 2019

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 4 December 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/12/2018	Full	Good
21/11/2017	Full	Good
22/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/08/2016	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
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 appropriate checks are made for staff who have worked outside of the UK and that gaps in employment, references, qualifications and reasons for leaving are verified by the registered manager for agency staff.	31/12/2019

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. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food, hygiene etc.); however in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, review the use of key pad locks to internal doors and the use of locked cabinets for televisions and toys.

- The behaviour management strategy should be understood and applied at all times by staff, and must be kept under review and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.34)

In particular, review the approaches and support offered to a young person to help the young person and to keep staff and children safe.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, the local authority has increased the number of bedrooms from five to six, to care for two children at a time of crisis. One of the children remains living at the home and one has moved to a supported living home. Managers and staff have put in considerable effort to provide warm and nurturing care in an emergency, as well as to provide much-needed short breaks.

Children make progress because of staying and living at this home. For example, one child who previously would not sleep during the night and was unable to use the toilet independently is now doing so. Staff ensure that thoroughly written behaviour management plans inform their consistent approaches to caring for children. Consequently, children make improvements with their social skills and independence.

Staff ensure that children with serious self-harming behaviours and socially unacceptable behaviours are highly supported. Staff encourage children to improve their behaviours. However, further work is required to ensure that individual behaviour support plans are regularly reviewed in a multi-agency forum so that all children continue to receive the help they need.

The manager is exceptionally skilled at ensuring that the wishes and feelings of children are captured. For example, activities such as arts and crafts and karaoke are used as opportunities to find out how to improve children's short breaks. Advocacy support and important conversations gather children's wishes about their favourite activities and food to improve their experiences.

The manager is passionate about and committed to ensuring that children access the local community. For example, children go swimming and cycling weekly. Children access the local community to enjoy Halloween discos adapted to their needs and celebrate occasions such as bonfire night. Staff keep electronic diaries of a child's journey at this home to capture their development.

The home is very clean and tidy. The manager and staff have recently decorated two lounge areas, and children's bedrooms are welcoming and personalised. However, televisions and toys are contained in locked cabinets. Some doors in the home have electronic keypads. This means that the home is not as homely as it could be.

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

Staff ensure that children are safe living at this home. There have been no significant complaints or allegations about staff since the previous inspection. Staff respond swiftly to concerns they may have about possible neglect of children who enjoy short breaks. For example, the manager reports concerns immediately to social workers. Safeguarding records and actions are recorded to a high standard.

Physical restraint is used as a last resort, and there have been five incidents of low-level intervention since the last inspection. This is because staff are highly skilled at engaging children in activities, distracting them and pre-empting their self-harming behaviours.

Staff are highly knowledgeable about safeguarding processes and practice. During this inspection, staff were able to share in-depth knowledge about how to protect children. Senior managers have ensured that staff have received training specifically related to safeguarding disabled children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is exceptionally committed to and enthusiastic about her role and the care provided to children. Since the last inspection, the manager has worked tirelessly to ensure that children have made progress and have been kept safe. Staff described the manager as 'excellent' and 'very knowledgeable and supportive'.

Staff have received, regular and meaningful supervision that has ensured effective oversight from the manager to maintain individualised levels of care. Team meetings and senior staff meetings take place regularly. This ensures that staff communicate and share updates in the best interests of children.

The manager is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the service and has completed an evaluative review of the quality of care provided within the last six months. This review is used to ensure that staff continually aspire to meet the aims and objectives set out in the statement of purpose.

The manager has well-organised training records that identify that all staff are up to date with mandatory training. Staff receive a range of additional and specialist training on issues such as disguised compliance, exploitation, equalities, speech and language, forced marriage and honour-based violence.

Typically, staff recruitment records are well organised and include the necessary checks. However, one file showed that a staff member had previously worked abroad but an overseas safeguarding check had not been completed. In addition, an agency record showed that references, qualifications, potential gaps in employment and reasons for leaving had not been verified. This could mean that some staff pose a risk to children if the manager does not verify these records effectively.

The manager ensures that the staff team has established links with professionals and parents to coordinate and meet the needs of children. During this inspection, feedback from social workers, transitions workers, parents and a psychiatrist was exceptionally positive about the high levels of care provided to children and the skill set of staff.

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: SC031504

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Director of Legal Services, City Hall, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TR

Responsible individual: James Beardall

Registered manager: Valerie Mower

Inspector

Anna Gravelle, social care inspector

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