

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	16/12/2015
Unique reference number	SC031504
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Bristol City Council
Registered person address	Bristol City Council, Director of Legal Services, City Hall, College Green, BRISTOL, BS1 5TR

Responsible individual	Karen Gazzard
Registered manager	Valerie Mower
	Claire Windeatt
Inspector	Clare Davies

Inspection date	16/12/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
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.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC031504

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- This service is going through a period of transition, reducing the provision from ten to five places. The lengthy review and full implementation of this change is yet to be completed.
- Leaders and managers of this service are hindered in their development of establishing a service for five children and young people due to the delay in securing alternative placements for some young people to move on to.
- The service has historically been delivered in two separate wings of the building by two staff teams. Staff and recording systems are now in the process of streamlining into one team, with one set of records.
- The management of medication is not sufficiently robust. Records fail to list all the medication held.
- The independent person who reviews the quality of care fails to report on current practice, often reviewing the previous month. This does not provide an accurate assessment as to whether children and young people are effectively safeguarded.

The children's home strengths

- Leaders and managers maintain a safe service for short breaks and a residential placement. During a difficult time of change and uncertainty, managers and staff continue to support children, young people and their families well.
- Change management has not led to any significant compromise in the quality of care afforded to children and young people with disabilities.
- Children and young people enjoy their short break where they meet friends and have fun.
- The manager and staff have strong partnership arrangements with parents and carers. Effective communication between the child's home and school contributes to consistent care and shared goals.
- The two managers complement each other well to fulfil their job sharing arrangement.
- The staff team are enthusiastic in their commitment to ensure that children and young people benefit from their short break experience with opportunities for new skills and activities.
- Parents and carers report positively about this short break service and value the respite that it provides to families caring for children and young people with disabilities. 'It is a fantastic place where staff are so tolerant and understanding'.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to the reduction in service, the registered person must: (2)(a) lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose.	29/02/2016
23: Medicines The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received in to the children's home. (Regulation 23(1))	31/12/2015

Recommendations

- Ensure that there is a cross reference to information held in key documents such as the care plan, risk assessments and positive handling plans. Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 42 paragraph 9.5)
- Review the recording of complaints and compliments to create an orderly system. The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 55 paragraph 10.24)
- Any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. In particular, this assessment must cover the period up to, and including, the day of the visit. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 65 paragraph 15.5)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide short breaks for up to ten children of either sex, with physical disabilities and/or learning difficulties. It is operated by the local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/11/2014	Full	Adequate
03/03/2014	Interim	Satisfactory Progress
25/11/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home	Requires improvement
At the previous inspection it was reported that two young people were residing at this setting due a response to their needs in emergency circumstances. The initial short term arrangements have continued over the last year while alternative placements are being sought. Despite these circumstances of operating wider than the primary function and purpose of the service, children and young people have their personal needs met well. This service is currently in a state of transition as it continues to provide a residential placement and adjusts to the reduction in short break provision. Managers and staff utilise the strength of their relationships with children, young people and their families to support them in managing changes. This involves adjustment to the day of their visits, a different bedroom and changes of staff. Effective use of photographs, symbols and social stories support these changes The reduction in service means that less of the building is in regular use. Two wings of the ground floor property previously separated children and young people by age. Now short breaks are predominantly accommodated in one wing with some use in the other side as young people wait to move on to alternative placements. Recording systems that have been previously duplicated for each wing of the building are slowly becoming single records for the whole service. Some administrative changes are required to complete this transition as well as the removal of signage that refers to the two named wings. Children and young people bring with them any medication they need during their short break. Staff are trained in medication procedures and routinely record what medication has been supplied, any administered, and then record what medication is being returned when the short break is over. The recording of non-prescribed medication is not so robust. During the inspection, two bottles of liquid pain relief were found stored in the medicine cupboard in addition to the amount recorded. This oversight has minimal impact on the safety of children and young people as medication is securely stored in the office. Children and young people have their care needs met, supported by in-depth personalised care plans that parents have contributed to. Key documents such as, the care plan, risk assessments and positive handling plans are well written and clearly explain how to respond to individual needs. However, these key documents are not always sufficiently linked to each other, lacking cross reference to significant behaviours. For example, a child that struggles with the transition of	

getting off a mini bus has a detailed risk assessment about this behaviour and how staff can support them to reduce this anxiety. Neither the care plan nor the positive handling plan mention this difficult transition. In practice, the staff respond with care and consistency and are able to park the minibus in a secure rear area of the property enabling the young person to vacate the bus at a pace that they are comfortable with. This shortfall in records fails to capture the good practice delivered by the staff team.

Children and young people enjoy their visits where they experience a warm welcome from dedicated staff. Short breaks are organised effectively to ensure that the group is compatible and friendships can develop and strengthen. There is good communication between parents and school staff to aid this process. Parents value that their children can benefit from a positive time away from home and enjoy an experience similar to a 'sleep over' with friends. Parents report, 'We love the 'family feel' of the environment and that he has social interaction with other children and adults'.

Children and young people have access to a wide range of stimulating, creative and fun activities. A sensory room, ball pool, toys and electronic devices provide indoor entertainment. Outside in the secure grounds, children and young people thoroughly enjoy the zip-wire that was installed in response to their requests. Local shops and parks are within a short walking distance and the use of the mini bus enables children and young people to access leisure facilities and places of interest further afield. Many children and young people have a fascination with transport and they are supported to use local buses. This enjoyment also provides opportunities to develop some social, and independence, skills.

Children and young people are encouraged and supported to develop their verbal and non-verbal communication. Staff are skilled in using a range of communication aids such as signing, picture symbols and use of computer programmes. All children and young people are invited to express their wishes and feelings and these are captured well by staff writing them down, taking photographs and using technology such as tablet computers. More formal group discussions with children and young people are recorded in writing and on occasion this task has been undertaken by the children.

Children and young people make progress as they are supported to reach personalised targets. Progress in personal care, dressing, using cutlery and cooking is relevant, and appropriate, to the level of ability and understanding. As young people approach 18 years of age they are prepared for leaving this service and the next transition in their young adult life. Photograph albums capture the time spent here and there is a celebration event to mark the occasion of them moving on.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Staff are trained in safe care practices, supported by up to date policies and procedures. Parents report that they have confidence in the staff team providing a safe environment for their child. The routine and structure enables children and young people to feel safe and comfortable while away from their families. The safe environment is not restrictive, it enables children and young people to take measured risks and take part in adventurous activities such as using the zip wire and going swimming in public pools. The level of staff supervision varies to meet the individual needs of children and young people. Comprehensive risk assessments determine the level of staff supervision required. As a result of sufficient staff, the risk of bullying and negative interactions amongst children and young people is minimised. Similarly the risk of going missing is significantly low; staff are aware of the policies and procedures to follow if this should occur. Creative use of communication systems promotes safety with children and young people. For example posters with symbols and pictures list who to contact if you are upset and not feeling safe. 'We are all good friends' promotes being kind to one another as the anti-bullying policy. Children and young people feel safe and secure in this setting as indicated through their behaviour where incidents of upset and distress are minimal. They are supported with strategies for alternative behaviour when staff identify triggers that may cause upset or self-harming behaviour, such as banging their head. Staff are skilled in distraction techniques and methods to de-escalate heightened behaviour. Incidents that require physical intervention are for short periods, often less than a minute to guide a child away from a situation to keep themselves, and others, safe from harm. Any concerns about children and young people are shared with parents and professionals to ensure decisions are made in a multi-agency forum. Good partnership working ensures that children and young people remain the focus of decision making. There is a sound recruitment process, ensuring that all necessary checks are undertaken before a member of staff starts work. This protects children and young people from unsuitable adults. The ground floor property is suitably maintained and provides easy access from the building in the event of a fire. Regular checks occur to make sure the fire	

protection systems are operating effectively.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
Leaders and managers of this home are going through the transition to redefine the short break provision and work towards the cessation of providing full time residential care. Once this transition is complete, the managers are keen to focus on raising standards and improving further the short break experience as an activity led resource. Consequently, the Statement of Purpose is under review. Two managers effectively share this role. They have been in post for different lengths of time of three and 13 years. They are qualified social workers and both are working towards a management qualification at level 5. The managers are successful in providing cohesive leadership for this service; they complement each other well with their management skills. Both managers say that they receive good line management support, particularly through managing the changes to the service over the last year. It has been a difficult period of uncertainty about the future of the service and the security of staff employment. The managers have responded well to support staff and parents in managing their upset and anxieties over the reduction in this provision. The staff team are enthusiastic and passionate about their work. They benefit from supervision, staff meetings and team days, providing them with opportunities to raise issues and share good practice examples. The review of the service leading to a reduction in the provision ultimately meant a reduction in the number of staff required. The managers are now raising the team morale and creating one staff team to work towards delivering the revised service. Employee assistance is available to staff members who require additional support with this transition. Staff report very positively on the support and direction provided by the two managers. There are some shortfalls in the recording of complaints. These records do meet the regulations yet they are messy and difficult to read as they are stapled and glued into a bound book. Independent monitoring occurs each month to comment on how well children and young people are effectively safeguarded. The independent person fails to report on current matters up to the day of the visit. This delay in reporting lacks scrutiny of any current safeguarding issues and therefore potentially overlooks the reporting of any significant concerns.	

The managers and the senior team report enthusiastically about a national event they attended with other short break services. This opportunity enabled the senior team to discuss current research and best practice examples to promote the Quality Standards. Staff members are encouraged to reflect on these standards and consider how they are implemented to provide the best outcomes for children and young people.

The development of using a tablet device to evidence achievements by taking photographs is an effective way to show progress and participation of children and young people. A staff member has created an electronic folder where photographs are collated under the relevant Quality Standard. Progress for children and young people is also achieved through working towards personal targets. Collaboration with parents and school staff maximise the opportunity for success as children and young people receive consistency of support to meet their targets.

Internal monitoring by the management team is good and the information gained is used to target areas for development and improvement. For example an increase in the use of physical intervention for one child (three in one month) involved reflective analysis leading to a review of the behaviour management plan and risk assessment. Similarly the effectiveness of sanctions has prompted team discussions on alternative strategies to use in supporting children and young people.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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