

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC034211
Inspector	Clare Davies
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 Mary Gazzard
Registered manager	Patricia Sylvia Mary Harding
Date of last inspection	28/01/2014

Inspection date	08/10/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	The home has not been subject to any enforcement action since the last inspection.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people achieve good outcomes due to the level of support they receive in what can be an interim placement. Young people are making progress in their personal, social and emotional development due to the structure and routine they receive from dedicated staff. The consistent response from the staff team enables young people to feel secure in this home where they develop good relationships with the manager and staff.

Consultation ensures that the views of young people are gathered and that they contribute to the development and running of the home. Young people benefit from the collaborative working between their parents, the staff team and other professionals. Social workers report positively on the care provided at this children's home.

The manager has effective systems to monitor the quality of care and has a good grasp of the strengths of the service and any areas for development. Shortfalls identified relate to a policy for missing children, record keeping and fire safety.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people of either sex, with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is operated by the local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/01/2014	Interim	good progress
07/11/2013	Full	good
18/12/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress
23/07/2012	Full	adequate

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
16 (2001)	prepare and implement a missing child policy. In particular, ensure the policy reflects the latest guidance from the government. (Regulation 16 (4)(b))	13/11/2014

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that children understand how their views have been taken into

account, and where significant wishes or concerns are not acted upon, they are helped to understand why. For example, ensure that the minutes of meetings held with children and young people are child friendly (NMS 1.2)

- ensure there is an emergency escape plan that all staff and children are familiar with and have practiced so they know what to do in an emergency. In particular, follow the home's policy of having an evacuation at least once in every quarter (NMS 10.9)
- ensure that records are clear, up to date and stored securely, and contribute to an understanding of the child's life. (NMS 22)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress and have an understanding of why they are currently living in this children's home. The admission to this home is often following a placement breakdown that can be confusing and distressing. Young people do not know how long they will be living at this home when they arrive, often the placement is for longer periods than expected while alternative longer term placements are being sought. Given this uncertainty, it is understandable that young people are initially reluctant to engage and invest in this placement.

It is a testament to the manager and staff team that young people settle well, forming relationships with the adults who care for them. Young people soon reduce the number of incidents where they display challenging behaviour as they begin to feel safe. For example, young people who required two staff to supervise them outside of the home and when travelling in a car no longer require this level of support. There is some disruption to the home in recent weeks due to a change in the group dynamics. The manager ensures that staffing levels are good and that there will only be four young people accommodated at present. This ensures that all young people can be supported in addition to those with complex needs.

The sudden admission to this home can lead to a change in young people's educational placement. For many young people academic progress is good considering the previous disruptions with their learning. Attendance at education provides structure during the day and young people develop in their confidence as they apply themselves to school work and achieve. All young people access education through local schools, colleges and alternative provision. There is a range of achievements celebrated in this home with certificates, rewards and praise. Some young people obtained GCSE qualifications in the summer of 2014. Where there are difficulties with regular attendance, meetings are held to try and resolve this.

Young people are encouraged to try new activities and join in local sports and youth groups; this enhances opportunities for social interaction and the development of personal skills. Basketball, table tennis and a trampoline are available for use in the garden. These facilities are readily available for young people and often provide a distraction when young people feel angry or upset.

Expectations of behaviour, house rules, redecoration of the house and new play equipment form areas of discussion at weekly meetings. The minutes of the meetings evidence how young people are consulted and involved with decision making about the home. However, the quality of recording is not child friendly and fails to engage young people as a record for future reference.

Young people receive good health care with support to attend health appointments.

They have access to advice on health issues from within the staff team, a specialist nurse and community resources. Young people are making healthy choices by not smoking and taking regular exercise such as cycling, sports and outdoor activities. Outcomes for young people are good as they increase their social and emotional development, avoiding involvement in any anti-social or criminal behaviour.

Staff recognise the importance for young people to keep in touch with family, friends and significant people. Young people are supported in maintaining contact with their family and previous placements in accordance with their care plan. This helps them in maintaining connections in their home area and understanding their cultural and family identity.

Young people are expected to contribute to the running of the home in small ways such as clearing the dining table, helping with cooking and keeping their bedrooms tidy. These tasks are developed further with additional life skills to assist with increasing levels of independence. For some young people there are opportunities for work experience. A young person's self-esteem received a boost from a very positive report from a placement manager. This feedback encourages young people to think about their future employment.

Quality of care

good

Young people enjoy good relationships with members of staff and the manager. Staff work well together delivering good quality care. The cohesive response to young people provides clear boundaries. Young people speak well of this home and the support and guidance provided by the staff team. Social workers express good levels of satisfaction about the quality of care provided. 'Staff have been fantastic, building a relationship with (young person), a good team approach.'

Young people are able to get on with each other though at times there are the tensions of group living where disagreements occur. Difficult interactions are managed well by the staff, their interventions are effective due to a good understanding of each young person. Young people are encouraged to be tolerant of each other and recognise differences. They receive support from staff in finding resolutions.

Young people are confident to raise suggestions and any matters of concern. They receive an explanation when it may not be possible to act upon their wishes. Young people know about the complaints procedure and records confirm that appropriate action is taken when young people do complain. Young people are able to contact their social workers, senior managers, family and independent visitor if they wish to talk to someone outside of the staff team and this provides an alternative outlet for any concerns they may have.

The safe handling and administration of medication is supported by trained staff,

most have achieved a qualification in first aid. Robust procedures for medication ensure that young people receive appropriate medical care safely. This home has developed effective links with health professionals, particularly to support young people with their emotional health and welfare. Professionals in the field of children's mental health have praised the staff team for the joint working undertaken.

Placement planning is tailored to individual needs. It is effective in the short term with a period of assessment to identify a more permanent placement. Placement plans supported by behaviour management plans, identify strategies for staff to employ in securing positive outcomes for the young people. Clear targets are set, linked to a financial reward. These targets help young people understand the focus and impact of their behaviour.

The home is generally well presented and maintained with an ongoing development plan. It provides a comfortable environment where young people feel secure. Bedrooms are personalised with pictures and possessions, and young people can choose the colours for redecoration. A community assessment on the location of the home has been completed by the manager in partnership with the local police to clarify that the location of the home does not pose additional risks to young people.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people are living in a safe environment and they are further protected by good use of risk assessment. These documents for individual young people include measures to prevent incidents of going missing. The interventions are effective as young people rarely go missing. This home refers to the local authority policy for children missing from home or care. This policy does not incorporate the guidance from the Department of Education issued in January 2014 and therefore lacks detail on preventative approaches. In practice staff are proactive and therefore this out of date policy has limited negative impact on the young people accommodated in this home.

The staff are trained on how to respond to safeguarding matters, supported by policies and procedures. Young people confirm that they can talk to a member of staff or someone outside of the home if they have any worries or concerns. Continual training ensures that staff are updated on safeguarding issues, such as e-safety, signs of safety and understanding trauma. Awareness and prevention of child sexual exploitation training is planned for November 2014.

The impact of young people leaving and arriving in this placement has meant that there has been a period of unsettled behaviour prior to this inspection. This has led to an increase in the number of incidents involving challenging behaviour. Written records of incidents of physical intervention are comprehensive and there is the opportunity for young people to contribute to the record after the incident, this ensures that their views are documented. Monitoring of these records inform changes

to behaviour management plans and a review of staffing levels. The consistent responses from the staff team along with structure and boundaries ensures that young people's behaviour is managed well. Young people feel safe within this home and benefit from the relationships formed with the adults around them.

There are some reports of incidents of bullying amongst the young people. While young people acknowledge this has occurred, they report that the staff 'sort it out'. Risks assessments identify the vulnerabilities of each young person and what support is required; similarly behaviour management plans specify the individual needs of each young person. Positive behaviour is also promoted through personalised targets linked to their behaviour and personal development. These daily incentives motivate young people to meet their targets and receive some financial reward. Risk assessments and personal targets are reviewed and amended regularly, involving young people in the changes made. This level of consultation engages young people in understanding risks and how they can be reduced in order to protect themselves.

The home provides a safe environment for young people and generally there are sound arrangements for addressing health and safety matters. The fire detection system is regularly tested though it has been five months since young people practised evacuating the building.

Leadership and management

good

The manager and staff make up an experienced residential team. Together in this home they provide a good quality of care to vulnerable young people with complex needs. The manager has seven years experience of managing this children's home and holds appropriate qualifications in management.

Collectively the team members are very experienced in residential care, they develop their skills through regular supervision, team meetings, team days and access to a training programme. The staff team are enthusiastic about their work and demonstrate a commitment to helping young people in achieving good outcomes and beyond. There is a breadth of knowledge and skills amongst the staff team, all are suitably qualified to level three in social care.

Complaints have been dealt with appropriately. Young people are confident to raise complaints and are satisfied with the responses. Records confirm that suitable action is taken following procedures. One recommendation was made at the last inspection to ensure that the 'missing policy' is updated in line with national guidance. It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to revise this policy however, this has yet to be completed.

The home is sufficiently staffed and resourced to meet the needs of the young people currently in placement. Staffing levels and a reduction in occupancy by one placement supports the current complement of young people. The staff team has a

good gender balance. There has been no recruitment for some time however, new staff have recently been redeployed from other settings within the local authority. A reduced induction programme is provided for these staff as they have extensive experience working within the local authority and consequently are familiar with many policies and procedures. Staff absences are covered by regular casual staff, this ensures continuity of care for young people and negates the need to use agency staff.

Generally the records made are clear and provide an accurate account of events. Some omissions were noted in daily records such as the date or time not entered. Greater attention to detail is required to complete records in full. However, this information can be found in other documentation, therefore there is no negative impact on young people through this shortfall.

This home has developed good relationships with key agencies such as, health services, schools, colleges, the police and the local community. This collaborative approach ensures that young people receive good support to meet their individual, and often complex, needs. Social care professionals report positively on this home and how the staff team are child focused. Feedback is sought directly from parents and professionals through use of a questionnaire, the responses to date are complimentary about the quality of care provided.

Regular monitoring of the quality of care takes place through the manager's checks and visits made by an independent person. Evidence of management oversight can be seen through changes made to sanctions issued. For example, loss of an activity has been replaced with a restorative sanction such as helping to put right any damage or mess caused by a young person. A review of the monitoring undertaken by the manager has been supplied to Ofsted to meet regulations.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.