

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	21/10/2015
Unique reference number	SC034211
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	Patricia Harding
Inspector	Clare Davies

Inspection date	21/10/2015
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	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC034211

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- Young people are not fully supported to make the most of informal learning. If they are not in full-time education or training, they lack structure to their day and do not receive motivation from the staff team to engage in opportunities for learning or purposeful activities.
- Young people are not receiving advice and guidance in relation to their personal and social development, particularly about sexual health. Young people who have missed periods of their education may not have the same level of information as their peer group gained through the curriculum.
- The leadership and management of this home fails to adequately monitor and review the quality of care. The system to review practice does not fully consider the views of young people, their families, staff and professionals. The local authority struggled to arrange for an independent person to visit the home each month. This is now been addressed.
- Staff members do not work effectively as a team. There is a lack of planning for each day, resulting in young people having to wait for activities such as shopping trips to be arranged.
- Record keeping lacks in quality and consistency. Some risks identified in care plans are not referred to in risk assessments and discriminatory language is used in reports and team meeting minutes.

The children's home strengths

- The manager and staff work in partnership with other agencies to safeguard young people. Staff take effective action to look for young people when they are missing to secure their safe return.
- Young people are supported well with their health and medical care. Collaboration with clinical services ensures ready access to support young people with their emotional well-being.
- The manager and staff build positive relationships with young people, often responding to their needs through an emergency placement. Young people seeking asylum are effectively supported to access services and develop their skills in English language.
- Most young people do engage with education and training, achieving exams and qualifications. Young people who have left formal education are supported to secure voluntary work with a charity.
- Social workers report that staff know young people well and provide consistent boundaries that effectively support young people in managing their behaviour. Behaviour management is good; physical intervention and sanctions are rarely used as staff use positive engagement and de-escalation techniques instead.
- The manager and staff actively support young people in maintaining contact with their family and friends. Families report good partnership working. Young people are supported to make and sustain contact with the community that they identify with.
- There are improvements in record keeping in key work sessions, the quality of the minutes of young people's meetings and involvement of young people in reading and commenting on their daily case records.

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
8: The education standard 8. In order to meet the education standard, with particular reference to providing structure and support to young people when they are not provided with education, training or employment, the registered person must ensure that staff: (2)(a)(v) promote opportunities for each child to learn informally.	09/11/2015
9: The enjoyment and achievement standard 9. In order to meet the enjoyment and achievement standard, the registered person must ensure that staff help each child to: (2)(a)(i) develop the child's interest and hobbies (ii) participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child's interests and preferences.	09/11/2015
12: The protection of children standard 12. In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to bolts on doors, the registered person must ensure: (2)(d) that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health.	09/11/2015

13: The leadership and management standard 13. In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must: (2)(b) ensure that staff work as a team (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	30/11/2015
33: Employment of staff The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development, in particular for understanding the mental health needs of young people. (Regulation 33(4)(a))	30/11/2015
44: Independent person: visits and reports The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. (Regulation 44(1))	30/11/2015
45: Review of quality of care The registered person must complete a quality of care review and must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (5))	30/11/2015

Recommendations

- Ensure that children are offered advice, support and guidance on health and well-being to enhance, and supplement that provided by their school through Personal, Social and Health Education. Staff should have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to help children understand, and where necessary work to change negative behaviours in key areas of health and well-being such as, but not limited to, nutrition and healthy diet, exercise, mental health, sexual relationships, sexual health, contraception and use of legal highs, drugs, alcohol and tobacco. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 35 paragraph 7.18)

- Ensure that written risk assessments include the use of cycle helmets and the vulnerabilities of young people for whom English is an additional language. 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)
- Ensure that all staff understand their roles and responsibilities and what they are authorised to decide on their own initiative to improve the daily planning of care and activities. There should be clear lines of accountability. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 54 paragraph 10.20)
- Ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 62 paragraph 14.4)

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 to provide short-term care and assessment before young people can move on to an alternative provision or return to their family.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/10/2014	Full	Good
28/01/2014	Interim	Good Progress
07/11/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	requires improvement
Young people are supported to develop positive relationships with the staff. A social worker reports that the team got to know the young person 'at his pace', this has enabled trust to build. Three young people are relatively new to this home within the last five months. They have responded well to the boundaries in place considering they did not always receive this level of structure prior to living here. Young people often arrive at this home in response to an emergency and without the opportunity to visit before living here. This practice is in line with the statement of purpose, for young people to have a period of assessment in the home to determine their needs and next placement. For some young people, this home has provided refuge and safety and they have responded well and made progress because of the care and support provided by staff. For some young people, the experience of residential care is against their wishes and they do not want to stay. Staff support young people in knowing their care plan and what needs to happen before they can move on, this level of consultation is important to empower young people in decision making about their future. Progress for young people is varied. Many have good attendance and attainment at school, college and training courses, achieving GCSE results and vocational qualifications. While young people are waiting to commence education or training courses they have minimal structure to their day, resulting in boredom and restlessness. Staff members sometimes fail to plan purposeful activities to motivate young people to learn through hobbies and interests. Similarly there is a lack of structure and planning to support young people in receipt of benefits and bursary payments. Young people receive such financial support for specific requirements yet they are not assisted with the budgeting and spending of it. This fails to prepare them for independent living. Young people seeking asylum in the United Kingdom (UK) make good progress in learning English as an additional language. Staff support them to develop contacts within the community where they can meet people of the same culture and religion while their immigration status is assessed. This home has successfully supported young people through college and into independent living as they claim asylum. The strength of relationships is strong as young people often return to visit. Young people with mental health needs receive care and support from the staff team with the aim of establishing a network of support before moving on. Staff ensure that young people with such needs meet with health care professionals and	

clinical services. Multi-agency working ensures a package of care provides psychiatric input and a safe placement. Staff receive guidance and support from mental health services, ensuring that they know how to respond to young people when they display self-harming behaviours. Staff are caring and supportive when young people are in crisis with their mental health yet they lack formal training in this area, resulting in staff not always feeling confident in their care practices.

Information is available in a folder in the home about a range of important health matters such as sexual health, smoking and the consequences of alcohol and substance misuse. This relies on young people reading this advice, as staff are not pro-active in ensuring that discussions are held on these matters despite two staff members being specifically trained to discuss sexual health with young people. Due to some young people missing full time education they may not have covered such personal development through the curriculum and consequently may lack information to make safe choices.

Young people are tolerant of each other and mostly they get on well as a residential group. Incidents of self-harm impact on the group as they show care and concern for each other. Staff consistently reassure young people that the staff team and other professionals are the adults to make the decisions to relieve young people of feeling responsible for each other. There are fun times when on outings and doing activities and these events are captured in photos to provide young people with memories of their time living here. Young people say they would like more activities and outings, 'I want to do more stuff', a shortfall recognised by some staff and social workers.

Young people are able to relate to their culture and heritage, supported through safe and meaningful contact with their family and friends. Family members report positively on working together with the manager and staff team with 'an open and honest relationship'. This partnership working provides stability for young people as they see the adults in their life working well together.

Most young people are 17 years old and have learnt skills to cook simple meals, manage their laundry and budget for their clothing and personal needs. These skills are essential before they move on to independent living as young adults.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement
The staff team have a good understanding of young people's particular	

vulnerabilities in order to safeguard them. The experience and training of staff enables them to respond swiftly to any concerns about the safety and protection of young people. A social care professional reports, 'they seem to know (young person) well, they have been very helpful, I have no concerns, corporate parenting is very good.'

In practice, the manager and staff team are aware of the risks associated with each young person. Records such as care plans and risk assessments do not always relate to each other to report on the same identified risks. For example, a care plan details the risks and vulnerabilities for a young person who has recently arrived in the UK and who does not speak English, yet this has not been captured in their risk assessment. In contrast, risks of self-harm behaviour and sexual exploitation are detailed in a risk assessment document yet not referred to within the individual's care plan. Consequently records are incomplete and hinder the monitoring of progress towards risk reduction. Young people who cycle are not encouraged to wear a helmet. This is in contrast to a written risk assessment that states young people will be provided with a cycle helmet. Young people need to have a discussion about protecting their head when cycling to make informed choices.

Incidents of going missing are effectively and safely managed, with staff taking action to look for young people to ensure their safe return. The current group of young people have gone missing individually on few occasions. A significant high number of incidents reporting a young person missing occurred in the summer months as offending behaviour increased when absent from the home.

Young people who are involved in criminal activity prior to living here, are not always immediately able to sever the links to their peers and crime in the community. For some young people their offending behaviour has increased, as staff were unable to manage their behaviour, leading to alternative placements. The staff team work in collaboration with the police and the youth offending team to try and engage young people away from criminal activity. This has not always been successful.

The manager and staff at this home have developed effective partnership working with the police and emergency health services. This ensures that when there are incidents of young people going missing and at risk of self-harming, information sharing enables agreed strategies to manage these events. This coordinated approach provides consistent messages to young people about how their behaviour can be safely managed.

Boundaries consistently implemented by staff provide structure for young people. Although young people say they don't like them, they are responding really well and making progress with their behaviour. The rare use of physical intervention and sanctions indicate that behaviour management is generally effective. Daily targets with a financial incentive encourage young people to respond positively

with socially acceptable behaviour. Safe and sensible use of the internet and social media is addressed in young people's meetings resulting in e-safety agreements. These discussions support young people in protecting their personal information and reviewing their privacy settings.

Regular fire safety checks ensure that young people, staff and visitors are in a safe environment and know how to respond if there is a fire.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
The Registered Manager has been in post for eight years at this home. She has a management qualification at level 4 and is working towards level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare. The staff team have numerous collective years of experience. There are some very positive aspects of care provided to young people at this home but the staff team lack cohesion and leadership. There is a lack of team identity with individual staff members working in isolation supported through comments such as, 'I do it this way' and 'this is what I do'. The lack of planning for each day supports individual styles of working and restricts collaboration for shared goals and outcomes. Staff members do not have clearly defined roles and responsibilities to contribute to an effective team. This is in contrast to other children's homes managed by the local authority where key staff have roles as 'champions' and strive to improve outcomes for young people in their delegated areas of work. Consequently at this home, the team lack motivation and a 'can do' attitude. Apart from the lack of training on mental health issues, staff report that there is a good training programme with regular events. Staff report that they are supported well by senior staff and the manager through supervision and staff meetings. The records of staff meetings lack ownership and are not routinely monitored by the manager. This is evident due to the inappropriate and discriminatory language used in the minutes. Monitoring and review systems lack depth. Records indicate that care plans are reviewed yet they contain outdated information. For example, a young person was prescribed medication in September and the care plan reports that this young person is not any medication despite a review dated October. A statutory review of a looked after child has not occurred within the required timescale. This omission	

was noted during the inspection however this had not been identified by staff and managers. Other meetings have occurred in a multi-agency forum therefore the impact is minimal on the young person.

The manager's review report on the quality of care provided at this home lacks analysis and fails to include the opinions of young people, staff, parents and professionals. There are efforts to gather the views of professionals and parents visiting the home through a survey, and young people are consulted through regular house meetings but these views are not incorporated into the review summary. Towards this inspection, parents and professionals report positively about their level of contact and communication from the manager and staff.

Since the last inspection there are improvements to some records. In particular, the summary of key work that often includes a photograph of an activity that has occurred with the young person. For example, assembling flat pack furniture, cooking and having their haircut. Young people are actively reading their daily records and able to comment with their views. This level of consultation is good and young people may understand language such as 'they kicked off', but this is not an acceptable term to be used and demonstrates a lack of understanding from staff about the impact of using such language.

A shortfall from the local authority is the lack of monitoring by an independent person each month. The Responsible Individual reports that it has been difficult to recruit to this role but an independent person is now in post to complete monthly visits.

Since the last inspection the environment has greatly improved with refurbished kitchen and bathrooms, and the majority of the home redecorated. Young people like the smaller lounge where they can access the internet through a large wall-mounted television screen.

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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