

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	31 May 2016
Unique reference number	SC034301
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Bristol City Council
Registered provider address	Bristol City Council, Director of Legal Services, City Hall, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TR

Responsible individual	James Beardall
Registered manager	Emma Hood
Inspector	Tina Maddison

Inspection date	31 May 2016
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	Inadequate
There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean that children and young people are not protected or that their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

SC034301

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is inadequate because:

- Safeguarding incidents that are identified by staff and reported to placing social workers are not followed up by the manager, leaving young people at risk of harm.
- Incidents of physical restraint are not always recorded within 24 hours. Records do not provide evidence of why one floor restraint was necessary and what action was taken by staff to try to avoid the need for a physical restraint. Young people do not have the opportunity for a discussion about the restraint within five days following the incident.
- Healthcare plans do not inform the staff of up-to-date information from healthcare professionals, or contain strategies to guide the staff to support the young people effectively with their healthcare needs. They do not detail possible side effects from changes in prescribed medication that may affect a young person's behaviour and how this should be safely managed.
- Young people are not always given the opportunity of a return to home interview by an independent person, following a period of unauthorised absence from the home. Information gathered by other agencies regarding incidents of young people being missing and subject to possible child sexual exploitation are not always sought by the manager to inform care plans.
- Up-to-date care plans that give staff clear strategies of how to manage behaviours are not available. Case record systems are chaotic, which makes it difficult for young people to see their progress and achievements and for staff to understand how best to support them.
- The home does not offer a homely environment to the young people. Some areas of the home are institutionalised and outdated in appearance.

The children's home strengths

- Staff succeed in obtaining education and training for all young people living in the home. All young people are making progress with their education from their starting points.
- Staff have warm and caring relationships with young people.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the registered persons 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes (iv) a description of the measure and (v) details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure and (vii) the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure (Regulation 35(3)(a)).	30 June 2016
The registered person must co-operate with the child's placing authority in agreeing and signing the child's placement plan. In particular, this document must be held on a child's file to inform staff of the child's care needs and how they are to be met at the home (Regulation 17(2)).	30 June 2016
The health and well-being standard In order to meet the health and well-being standard, the registered person must ensure that children achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plan and that staff understand and develop skills to promote the child's well-being (Regulation 10(2)(i)(iv)).	30 June 2016
The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must enable, inspire and lead a culture in relation to the children's home that ensures that staff work as a team, and that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; in particular that staff receive regular supervision and that team meetings take place on a regular basis (Regulation 13(1)(2)(b)(c)).	30 June 2016
The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure that staff assess whether each	16 June 2016

child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; in particular that action is taken when there are signs that a child is at risk of harm (Regulation 12(2)(i)).	
The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person should ensure that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; in particular that children's liberty of movement is not restricted through the staff locking a door to keep children in a room in order to keep them safe from each other, or by the use of bedroom door alarms when an individual risk assessment to justify their use has not been undertaken (Regulation 12(2)(b)).	30 June 2016
The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person should ensure that staff assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; in particular that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return-to-home interview. The registered person should take in to account information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child (Regulation 12(2)(a)(i)).	30 June 2016
The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, the registered person should ensure that staff provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; in particular that: ■ a nurturing and supportive environment is provided for children that is homely and domestic ■ as far as possible, a domestic rather than institutional impression is maintained ■ interior doors have locks removed and are of a domestic appearance ■ unnecessary signage is removed ■ the bathroom is refurbished ■ grilles are removed from the office windows	30 June 2016

■ entry systems on exterior doors are replaced with domestic locks ■ the stairs are of a domestic appearance. (Regulation 6(2)(b)(vii))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child, which the registered person considers to be serious (Regulation 40(4)(b)).	30 June 2016
The registered person must maintain records ('case records' for each child which are kept up to date (Regulation 36(1)(b)).	30 June 2016

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a local authority and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17 March 2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
8 September 2015	Full	Good
20 February 2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
24 October 2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
Managers do not ensure that healthcare plans contain clear information and guidance for staff about how best to meet the healthcare needs of young people. For example, one young person has complex mental healthcare needs, but an up-to-date plan that is informed by healthcare professionals is not available for staff to refer to. They do not have the information that will guide them to support the young person effectively. The most recent mental healthcare information informing staff is from 2014 and is no longer relevant. Details of recent medication reviews are not contained in healthcare plans, so the staff are not fully informed about recent changes and possible side effects. Two of the young people are regularly engaging in drug taking. The plans for these young people give staff no clear strategies of action to take to manage this behaviour. Staff have offered advice to young people regarding the dangers of drug taking, and engaged an advisor in the misuse of drugs from a young people's project, but this has not been successful in reducing drug use. Young people report that they learn independent living skills and can list the skills that they have learned, such as budgeting, shopping, using the bus and opening a bank account. These positive outcomes are not recorded and so it is difficult for staff to assess the progress that young people are making and the independent living skills that they still need to learn. There are often tensions in the home between the young people due to their very different care needs and abilities. One young person stated in a key-worker session that they would not choose to live with the other children, but have been put in an environment where they do not fit in, and they struggle with this. Another young person said, 'I don't like it here. One of the young people is very difficult to live with - constantly slamming and smashing. Staff tell them to stop but they don't. I've been locked in the lounge by staff and asked them to lock me in to get away. It's very annoying. They don't think of the effect on us.' Some young people get on well together, but the group as a whole is not harmonious and is not one that will help young people to achieve the best possible outcomes. The manager and staff are effective in ensuring that young people are engaged in education or training. They actively source education placements and are creative in finding solutions when young people are reluctant to engage in education. For example, the staff source specialist projects in which to place school refusers. They help young people write a curriculum vitae and apply for jobs and they help young people who are asylum seekers and those who do not have English as a first language to gain access to the appropriate educational courses.	

The staff are sensitive to the diverse cultural and religious needs of young people. They make efforts to research different religious needs relating to food and worship. Young people are effectively supported to understand and tolerate young people of different faiths and to learn about different cultures.

Young people are involved in helping to decorate some areas of the home. For example, the two lounges are homely and well decorated, and young people chose the furniture and colour scheme. The young people are able to care for pets, such as fish, and to grow vegetables and flowers in the garden. To succeed in such tasks helps to improve their self-esteem and confidence.

Relationships between staff and young people are amiable and warm. Staff care about them and want to try to achieve positive outcomes for them. All young people spoken with said that they liked the staff. One young person said, 'It's really nice here and the staff are really good. They made me feel welcome and are understanding.'

Staff create memory boxes for young people so that they are able to keep memories of their time in the home. The boxes include photographs of achievements, trips and photographs of staff.

The families and friends of young people are welcome to visit. The staff support young people to visit their families and friends by providing transport and supervising visits if necessary. A range of activities is available for young people, such as swimming, visits to the library, trips to holiday and theme parks. This helps young people to broaden their horizons and to learn new skills.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
Managers and staff fail to protect young people from unsafe situations. In one instance, a potential safeguarding risk to a young person was identified by a member of staff. They passed the information to the young person's social worker who did not act upon the concerns. The manager then failed to follow up the outcome of this referral and the young person remained at risk. Young people who are at risk of child sexual exploitation and regularly go missing from the home are not always offered a return to home interview from an independent person. Following a reduction in incidents of missing, one young person is now regularly going missing again. Staff follow procedures and liaise with relevant agencies, including the police, but do not always obtain full information	

from them to gain a comprehensive picture of where young people are, whom they are with and what they are doing.

Staff fail to complete the records of physical restraint comprehensively. Incidents of physical restraint are rare in the home, but on one occasion, a young person was held on the floor by staff. Records do not provide evidence of why this was necessary or what de-escalation strategies were used to try to avoid the restraint and a debriefing session was not undertaken with the young person within five days, following the incident of restraint.

Staff struggle to manage the behaviour of some young people. This results in the other young people being locked in the lounge for their own safety and bedroom door alarms being routinely used without individual risk assessments being undertaken to justify their use. Behaviour management plans do not give staff comprehensive and robust guidance on strategies to use to manage behaviour. This failure has led to staff having to call the police to manage the behaviour of young people, following complaints from neighbours that young people are using drugs, engaging in sexual activity and causing a nuisance in the neighbourhood.

All young people spoken with during the inspection stated that they felt safe living at the home and that staff would keep them safe. All could identify a trusted adult that they would speak to if they had a concern or worry. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that only suitable persons are admitted to the home. On the day of the inspection, a workman was turned away from the home, as he did not carry sufficient suitable identification.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate
Leaders and managers do not have an effective system of recording and monitoring case records. Information is chaotically stored, making it difficult for the staff to obtain the information that they need to care effectively for the young people. Plans are not focused or targeted and do not detail what aspirations the young people have and how these can be achieved. The lack of effective recording and up-to-date care plans mean that the young people and staff are unable to provide evidence of progress and outcomes clearly. Staff do not have consistent guidance from regularly updated plans and risk assessments. Serious incidents involving the police are not always notified to Ofsted by the manager. For example, one incident of a complaint from neighbours regarding the	

unacceptable behaviour of the young people and consequent police attendance at the home to manage the young people's behaviour was not notified to Ofsted.

Staff supervision and staff meetings do not take place regularly. The manager does not ensure that there is a regular forum for information to be shared so that staff are able to maintain and improve their skills. Most of the staff have worked at the home for some years. This means that the staff team is stable and consistent, but also that some practice is outdated. For example, staff refer to the home as 'the unit' and state that children be 'put out with the police' when they go missing. This need for modernisation and improvement is recognised by the registered individual, who has formulated a residential childcare improvement project to tackle this. The manager has plans to visit children's homes rated by Ofsted as outstanding in order to inform and improve practice and systems in the home.

The manager has limited influence regarding which children are admitted to the home. This decision is made by the service managers. Comprehensive impact risk assessments are not always undertaken prior to a young person being admitted to the home, resulting in a diverse mix of young people, complex care needs and an unstable environment. Not all young people get on well together and some refuse to eat together or to attend young people's meetings together. There are no strategies in place to deal with this.

Managers fail to ensure that the environment of the home provides a homely and domestic environment throughout for young people. All interior doors are fitted with locks that the staff have keys for and use if they feel that a situation regarding the behaviour of a young person warrants the doors being locked to keep everyone in the home safe. The staff office is entered through a door that is reinforced, fitted with double locks and has an institutional eye-level small window. The two office windows are fitted with grills that can be pulled across the window. On the day of the inspection, these were pulled across one window. All rooms used by staff are fitted with a reinforced metal panel that gives young people the impression that staff need to be physically protected from them. The bathroom is dated; the floor is fitted with institutional-type linoleum. The bath has extensive mould in the grouting. The front entrance door is an institutional type of door and there is a call-button entry system that is prominently displayed. Also displayed is a large sign instructing the postman not to hand any mail to the young people. This indicates distrust of young people by the staff.

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 children looked after 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 that 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 that 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 whom 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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