

SC039897

Registered provider: Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a local authority. It is registered for four young people. The home provides care for young people aged 12 to 18, who have experienced adverse childhood experiences that have led to associated trauma and presenting complex behaviours.

Inspection dates: 16 to 17 January 2020

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 17 July 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/07/2018	Full	Outstanding
29/08/2017	Full	Good
21/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
27/09/2016	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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5(a))	31/03/2020
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8(1)(2)(a)(vi)(viii))	06/03/2020
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. (Regulation 10(1)(a)(b)(c))	06/03/2020
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to 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;	06/03/2020

take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and 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. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)(vi)(d))	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(f)(h))	31/03/2020
The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14(1)(a))	06/03/2020
A responsible individual must— have the capacity, experience and skills to supervise the management of the home, or the homes, in respect of which the responsible individual is nominated. (Regulation 26(7)(b))	31/03/2020
The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home— if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). 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(2)(a)(b)(3)(d))	06/03/2020
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(4)(b)(c))	06/03/2020
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out—	06/03/2020

how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. 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— details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35(1)(a)(b)(3)(a)(ii)(v)(vii)(b)(i)(c))	
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date. (Regulation 36(1)(a)(b))	31/03/2020
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))	06/03/2020
When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46(1)(2))	06/03/2020

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.

Just as in a family home, children should be able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's

needs. Limits on privacy and access may only be put in place to safeguard each child in the home (regulation 21(c)(i)). Any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home and any modifications to the environment of the home, must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. Information on restraint and deprivation of liberty is contained in the protection of children section of the Guide from paragraph 9.41. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9 and 3.10)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Some matching decisions about new young people coming to live at the home are poor, and managers do not always consider the needs of young people who are already resident. This has been very unsettling for some young people and has compromised their safety and welfare.

Staff do not consistently deliver good care that meets young people's needs well. Education and care review meeting records show that most young people have not made good progress while living at the home. Young people do not always experience the stability that they need to make good progress. For example, most young people have moved on from the home abruptly because staff could not meet their needs safely and effectively.

Most young people do not do well in education, and staff do not support them adequately with their learning. For example, most young people who have left the home since the last inspection are not accessing education regularly. The two young people living at the home at the time of the inspection are on a reduced timetable. Although this is an improvement from their starting points, staff do not engage young people in constructive activities outside these times. This does not provide young people with good routines and structure throughout the school day to help them increase their learning hours and improve their readiness to return to school. Managers and staff do not liaise with and challenge professionals effectively to review young people's education plans and learning needs. This leads to drift. In addition, it means that staff are not supporting young people to fulfil their potential, and this may have an impact on their future life chances.

Young people do not receive the help that they need to be healthy. For example, staff reported that young people resort to eating unhealthy food because the meals at the home are 'healthy but not tasty', and so young people do not always eat them. Despite knowing that this is a concern for young people, managers and staff have not acted to address this. This lack of action means that staff are not helping young people in line with the aims and objectives set out in their health plans. In addition, staff do not have

access to one young person's health assessment record. As a result, staff do not know whether this young person has any outstanding health needs.

Some areas of the home are generally well maintained. However, others are not. This does not create a consistently homely and welcoming environment for young people. Damage caused during recent incidents of young people's challenging behaviour has not been repaired promptly. In addition, young people cannot freely access the conservatory, as staff keep this locked. There is no identified safeguarding risk that warrants this measure. As a result, young people cannot freely access all communal areas of their home, and it gives the home an institutionalised feel.

Some young people made some good progress while living at the home. For example, one young person learned how to self-administer her medication, and another young person achieved qualifications and went on to attend college. He also had a planned and positive experience of moving onto semi-independence.

Young people have opportunities to express their wishes and feelings through key-work sessions, young people's meetings and having access to an advocate. They are involved in making decisions about some aspects of the day-to-day running of the home.

Young people have access to different leisure activities such as going to the cinema, shopping, going on day trips and being involved in the Children in Care Council group. This gives young people some positive experiences and develops their self-esteem.

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

Managers failed to promptly organise for damaged fire doors to be repaired. One young person told the inspector that they were worried about this. This shortfall was addressed during the inspection when the inspector stipulated the urgency of doing so.

Managers and staff do not always understand and manage risk well. For example, managers, including senior managers, did not effectively review risks relating to one young person who was involved in serious incidents in the community. This left this young person and others at risk of harm.

Staff have struggled to manage some young people's behaviour effectively. Some young people have negatively influenced other young people's behaviour. Young people have also witnessed violent behaviour displayed by their peers towards staff, and some have been intimidated by them. This does not help young people to feel safe.

Sanctions are not restorative, and managers do not always review the effectiveness of the sanctions that staff use. As a result, staff are not helping young people to learn and to improve their behaviours. One child said that the sanctions he receives do not help him to understand and change his behaviour.

Not all young people have an individualised missing from care protocol, which gives staff clear guidance on the actions they need to take when young people go missing from the

home. On one occasion, staff did not follow the guidance in response to a young person leaving the home without authorisation, when this was set out in the young person's plan.

Recruitment practice is not robust. Managers lack the professional curiosity needed to explore staff's employment histories and clarify discrepancies in employment dates. Furthermore, managers do not always verify the reasons why staff left previous employment involving children and vulnerable adults. This does not help to ensure that only safe adults are employed to care for the young people.

Some restraint records do not contain all the required information. For example, managers do not evaluate the effectiveness and the proportionality of the restraint used against the behaviour displayed by young people. This is a missed opportunity to identify any issues in staff's practice that have the potential to place the young person at risk of harm. Furthermore, records do not always detail the young person's behaviour leading up to the restraint, and it is not clear whether debriefs to staff and young people are undertaken within the required timescales. Sometimes, staff involved in the restraint debrief young people. This does not give young people the freedom and confidence to raise any concerns that they may have about the restraint.

Managers do not always notify Ofsted about all significant events. This means that the regulator is not given relevant information to inform its monitoring of the service and assessment about whether staff respond appropriately when serious incidents occur.

Staff undertake some good key-work sessions with young people about issues that are causing young people or others concern. However, this is not done consistently well, and so not all young people are receiving the support they need. For example, it is not clear how staff help some young people to learn about how to keep themselves safe when accessing the internet, including social media.

The interim manager has recently reviewed the locality risk assessment. However, he did not consult partner agencies in compiling this assessment to ensure that it contains information about all current risks. This does not show good partnership working to help inform staff and young people about potential risks that young people may face when they are out in their local community and how they can keep themselves safe from harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The registered manager is currently off sick. Her absence has created instability in the leadership and management of the home. The interim manager has been in post for six weeks and has an initial grasp of the needs of the service. He has not yet applied to be registered with Ofsted.

Managers, including senior managers, do not always act on recommendations made by the independent visitor. As a result, managers are not using independent feedback about the quality of care to improve this for young people. Poor internal monitoring by

managers and senior managers is not leading to sustained improvements. This affects young people's experiences of living at the home and their safety, and it limits the progress that they make.

On one occasion, senior managers admitted a young person into the home despite information contained in impact risk assessments that made it clear that this would not be appropriate. This contributed to the breakdown of the placement of a young person who was already living at the home and had an impact on the safety and emotional well-being of another young person.

Staff and managers do not keep young people's records up to date. For example, staff did not have up-to-date health records and education plans for young people. Young people's records do not always give a clear description of incidents to help managers and staff to understand how the incident started and what action was taken at which stage. This does not support young people's progress and it does not help managers to review incidents and work with staff to learn from what has happened.

All staff are up to date with mandatory training. However, not all staff have undertaken self-harm training. This is despite two young people coming to live at the home who have a history of self-injurious behaviour. This does not prepare staff well and does not fully promote young people's welfare.

Staff do not receive supervision regularly and have not had their yearly appraisal. This is a missed opportunity to provide staff with guidance, address any shortfalls in their practice and enable them to reflect on their own development. This shortfall contributes to the lack of good-quality care being provided to young people.

Some experienced staff are currently off sick. Managers have used the same bank and agency staff to give young people some consistency. Staff have shown some resilience through a challenging period, though the cumulative effect of this has left them tired and demoralised.

Staff receive monthly support from the emotional health and well-being team. This provides staff with the opportunity to discuss young people's behaviours and most appropriate ways to respond to these. Unfortunately, this has not always been effective in bringing about improvement.

Managers and staff take complaints from young people seriously and investigate these. However, they do not always share the outcome of the complaint with the young person who raised it. This can leave young people feeling not valued or listened to.

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: SC039897

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Council House, Priory Road, Dudley DY1 1HF

Responsible individual: Jake Shaw

Registered manager: Melanie Hollman-Dryden

Inspector

Rumbi Mangoma, social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2020