

SC044880

Registered provider: Brighton & Hove City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority-owned children's home provides short breaks and longer-term care for children aged between eight and 18. According to its statement of purpose, the children have severe or moderate levels of learning disabilities, as defined in their education, health and care plans.

The home has two managers who share the registered manager role. They have been registered with Ofsted since 2013 and 2015, respectively.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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.

Date of last inspection: 9 June 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/06/2021	Full	Good
04/02/2020	Full	Good
24/07/2018	Full	Outstanding
08/08/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Senior leaders at the local authority have moved children who are staying longer term in the home into living with children who visit on short breaks. This has been against the wishes of the registered managers. When this has happened, there have been no formal discussions or risk management plans to consider the impact on children living in the home or those visiting for short breaks. This has had a significant impact for one child, who could no longer stay in their normal bedroom. This causes upset and confusion for the children and has contributed to an increase in physical interventions for some children. This home is also not registered for short breaks and therefore is operating outside its conditions of registration.

When the registered managers plan for children to stay in the home, this is done well. The children are sensitively supported to visit the home and then stay overnight and are introduced to short breaks at a pace suited to them and their families. For these children, there is evidence of good multi-agency working and effective liaison with parents and health and education professionals. This ensures that plans are current and effective in supporting the children's needs. A social worker said: 'The use of Drove Road for has supported the family enormously.'

The staff know the children very well. They have created detailed and descriptive care plans that beautifully capture what is most important to the children when they stay. The use of photos and gentle reminders for staff to guide them on how to care for each child helps the children to feel comfortable and relaxed. A social worker said: 'The child has built a strong and trusting relationship with their key worker and the other regular members of staff.'

The staff make excellent use of the children's communication resources, tools and methods. The systematic use of the Picture Exchange Communication System is embedded into daily practice. This means the children are empowered and encouraged to make everyday life choices. This enhances the variety of opportunities available to them, and promotes their skills and abilities in building positive and trusting relationships with adults.

For the children who live in the home permanently, the staff support them to plan and prepare for their holidays. The staff have lovingly recorded special events and kept momentums of the children's trips. This helps the children to remember and share their experiences with family members and significant others.

Managers have been creative in supporting the children who are turning 16 to make informed decisions about their forward care planning arrangements. The staff skilfully assess the children using adaptive questions to help them have their say. This means children who communicate non-verbally, with staff support, can express their views, feelings and aspirations about their futures.

The staff support the children to attend their places of worship and instil cultural practices in the home, such as listening to music, praying and reading religious books. The staff supported one child with the use of their individual communication aids to attend and enjoy Eid celebrations within their wider community. These practices help the children to understand and explore their heritage and identities.

The staff and managers are working imaginatively to support one child with a degenerative health condition. This is helping the child to prepare for visits and familiarise themselves with health equipment. This is improving their chances of attending regular health appointments and reduces their worries and fears about what to expect when they visit.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

On occasion, the staff are using unapproved restrictive practices when they feel they are unable to manage the children's behaviours safely. The independent visitor to the home has highlighted this practice to the registered managers and this has prompted a change in how the staff are recording these. However, the reasons for the staff using this practice have not been analysed or shared with social care professionals. This means there have been no multi-agency discussions or agreed plans for the measures or interventions the staff are using when they feel the children's plans are ineffective. This, combined with the lack of staff training, creates a risk that staff may continue to use strategies to manage behaviours that are not assessed to be suitable or appropriate for children.

On one occasion, senior leaders did not follow the correct processes for managing a staff conduct concern. The incident that prompted this concern was not shared with Ofsted or safeguarding professionals at the time the concern was raised. This omission has the potential to put children at risk and hinder the effective investigation of safeguarding concerns.

The staff have created very individualised behaviour support plans for the children. These plans link effectively with education and have a clear focus on helping the children learn and develop their social skills. The staff support the children to understand the importance of appropriate touch and how to greet people. This helps the children establish and maintain friendships.

There is a long-serving and experienced staff team in the home. Its members have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and know whom to contact if they have concerns regarding the safety or well-being of a child. However, some staff have not received safeguarding refresher training for a significant period of time. This has the potential to hinder safe working practices.

The registered managers have developed informative and practical risk management plans for the staff to follow. This means the staff have clear strategies and guidance when the children need their support the most. For the children, this means they are

often met with consistency and a familiar approach. However, not all the staff have the necessary up-to-date training to fulfil these plans. This means that on occasion, the children are being supported by staff who do not have the required certificated training in meeting these needs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good.

In November 2021, the home's previous responsible individual left the local authority and was replaced by the assistant director of children's services. In January 2022, the responsible individual role was passed to the interim head of service within the local authority. The interim head of service is planning on attending responsible individual training in the coming months as this is the first time she has held this position. However, senior leaders have not yet submitted the relevant documentation to Ofsted to confirm these arrangements.

The staff say that the registered managers are visible and work hard to ensure that the children are well looked after. Allocated social workers say that the staff frequently attend the children's reviews and advocate well for children, and that there is good communication between parents, schools and social care colleagues. This is evident in the children's relevant plans, targets and outcomes.

Since the last inspection, two of the kitchens within this large building have been remodelled and refurbished to a good standard. The registered managers have worked together to create kitchens that promote the children's independence skills while maximising their dining experiences. This means the children can safely enjoy a meal with their friends and develop important meal preparation skills, such as making their own toast and choosing their spreads.

The registered managers have reviewed and changed the way they record and have oversight of staff training. The colour-coded system makes it easier to spot training gaps and expiry dates for individual staff. However, this now shows significant gaps and refresher training needs for the entire staff team. The staff say they struggle to find the time to keep their online training up to date. The provision for staff training and the communication between senior managers in identifying staff training needs are poor.

The registered managers have not received supervision from their line manager since January 2022. There have been some joint meetings, and recorded discussions but these do not reflect good, formal, supervision practices. This means they have not had the opportunity to reflect on their past months, celebrate their successes and plan for their future development.

The arrangements for delegated authority for the children who visit this setting more regularly are unknown. For one child, this is having an impact on them receiving effective and well-planned care. For example, they waited longer than necessary for an emergency dental appointment as the responsibility arrangements were unclear. This therefore hindered the child receiving prompt medical attention. This

demonstrates a lack of understanding in engaging with the local authority to seek and secure the input and services required in meeting the children's presenting needs when they visit.

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 and seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)) In particular, when a child is staying in the home longer than home's condition of registration, the registered manager and senior leaders must determine delegated authority for the child to ensure that they are meeting their everyday needs.	1 July 2022
If the registered provider is an organisation, the organisation must ensure that the responsible individual undertakes such continuing professional development as is necessary to ensure that the responsible individual has the skills needed for supervising the management of the home. (Regulation 29 (2)) This is a repeated requirement.	1 July 2022
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(a))	1 July 2022

This is a repeat requirement.	
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; 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)(h)) This is a repeat requirement. In particular, the registered manager and senior leaders must ensure the staff have the relevant and up-to-date training to meet the children's needs. And; the registered manager must ensure that any conditions of registration placed on the home accurately reflect the home's statement of purpose.	1 July 2022
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development and receive practice-related supervision. (Regulation 33 (4)(a))	1 July 2022
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	1 July 2022

Recommendation

- Records of restraint, including restrictive practices, should enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure that it meets the needs of each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: SC044880

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Brighton & Hove City Council

Registered provider address: Hove Town Hall, Norton Road, Brighton BN3 3BQ

Responsible individual: Georgina Clarke-Green

Registered managers: Karen Rusbridge, Victoria Witham

Inspector

Kelly Monniot, Social Care Inspector

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