

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 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.

At the time of the inspection, three children were staying at the home for short breaks. One young person and two adults live long term in accommodation separate to that used for short breaks.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since June 2013.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 April 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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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: 16 April 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/04/2024	Full	Good
16/05/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
04/05/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
09/06/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

The service is judged inadequate primarily due to the management arrangements for the home. There has been insufficient management capacity to provide oversight of safeguarding practice and the day-to-day care for children. In addition, a young adult living in a flat separate from the main accommodation has a range of needs that at the time of the inspection, were observed to be beyond the ability of staff to provide safe and suitable care. This young adults' care is provided by an external organisation.

The living conditions for one young adult are not safe. The young adult lives in a flat that is separate from the main accommodation. Conditions in this flat are unsanitary and in a state of poor repair. This poses significant health and safety risks and is not conducive to promoting the young adult's well-being and sense of security. A compliance notice has been issued to urgently address these concerns.

There is a lack of sufficient permanent staff at the home. This means that children experience care from a high number of different staff and do not always have a consistent experience of care. Staff reported the staffing instability has negatively affected the progress of some children, leading to a noticeable decline in some behaviours.

The provider has not been able to successfully support children to move on to appropriate adult placements. This means that the two young adults have stayed in the home for long periods. Whilst the placement has been able to meet the needs of one of these young adults, it is not an appropriate placement given their age.

Children's wishes and feelings are not consistently incorporated into the development of the service. After incidents have occurred, children's thoughts and feelings are not sought. Staff have the option to use social stories to enhance children and young people's understanding. However, staff are not currently using these social stories to help children better understand and be involved in decisions or choices.

Most children are generally supported well in terms of their health needs. However, on one occasion, staff failed to provide suitable care for a child who had an injury. As a result, the injury got worse, and this was not detected by the staff looking after the child.

Children's progress is mixed. Core permanent staff speak positively about children and maintain positive relationships with the children and young people they support. This helps staff understand their needs. As a result, these children and young people are happy and making some progress. One parent noted that their child's increased confidence was due to the support received from staff.

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

There are widespread failures in relation to safeguarding in terms of staff practice, management oversight and record-keeping. This places children at risk of harm.

Safeguarding procedures are not followed regularly. For example, a serious allegation about a staff member was reported to the local authority designated officer (LADO), although at the time of the inspection the investigation could not be found.

Leaders and managers do not consistently review incidents. When incidents are reviewed, the records lack detail and do not explore any areas for learning. As a result, staff are not receiving the necessary guidance from managers to ensure the safety of children and young people.

Safeguarding records are not clear or comprehensive. Records are handwritten and difficult to read. There are no records to show how allegations or concerns have been handled. A staff member said that one child made repeated allegations about staff. However, this was not documented and there was no evidence to indicate that these allegations had been acted on.

Children and young people's initial risk assessments are well recorded and identify areas of vulnerability and safety plans. However, these assessments are not updated in response to emerging concerns.

One young adult is occasionally monitored using camera surveillance. However, leaders and managers do not have oversight of its use and cannot ensure it is being used appropriately. Furthermore, the registered managers have not confirmed that staff from an external organisation, who are supporting the young adult, are suitable to work with children and young people.

Annual fire safety checks of the home are conducted by fire professionals. However, the recommended high-priority actions have not been completed within the required timeframes.

There are a number of long-term permanent and bank staff that know the children well. These staff have positive relationships with children and young people and are able to help children when they are anxious. This helps children to cope and often avoids behaviour incidents from escalating.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Since the last inspection, there has been insufficient management capacity to provide support to staff or effective oversight of the day-to-day care. The registered manager has been working part time for an extended period and has been on sick leave since February 2025. An acting manager was appointed, but also only on a part-time basis. The provider has recruited a new full-time manager, but this person was not in post at the time of the inspection.

Leaders and managers do not have sufficient presence within the home. Therefore, they do not know the children and young people well. Staff said communication between staff and leaders is poor. They report that they are not informed, involved, or consulted on key decisions about the home. Staff commented that this made it difficult for them to communicate with parents using the short-breaks service. Some planned short breaks have been cancelled due to staffing shortages.

Staff morale is low. They do not feel supported and listened to. Supervisions are not taking place regularly in line with the organisation's policy. One staff member said they had received two supervisions in the last year. In addition, annual appraisals are not completed for staff or managers and this is a missed opportunity to support their learning and development.

The statement of purpose of the home has not been updated to reflect staff and management changes.

Staff do not always work well together as a team to support the children. There are some tensions between individuals in the team and the manager noted that this has caused some newly hired staff members to leave the home. This has contributed to instability and a lack of consistent care for the children. One staff member resigned during the inspection, citing a lack of support and not being heard by managers when they raised concerns.

A review of the quality of care provided to children is not being carried out. Key documents essential to the development and improvement of the service are not being updated or reviewed. This prevents managers and leaders from assuring themselves that children are receiving high-quality care.

Feedback from parents was mixed. Some parents said their children looked forward to staying at the home, while others expressed concerns about their children's difficulties in settling, as well as issues with staff practice. Inconsistent management was reported to negatively affect the quality of communication. Parents also raised concerns about the impact on children's behaviour when planned stays were cancelled.

Feedback from social workers was positive, commending staff's communication and their ability to build positive relationships with children.

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, The 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
*The protection of children standard 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 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)(d)) In particular, ensure that the living conditions in flat C are safe and suitable. This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.	20 May 2025
The protection of children standard 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe;	

have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; 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; that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e))	
Fire precautions After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)) In particular, ensure that actions deemed high risk from the fire risk assessment are addressed.	15 April 2025
The leadership and management standard In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and	6 October 2025

use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (2)(a)(b)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h)) In particular, ensure that there is sufficient management capacity to provide oversight of the day-to-day care and safeguarding practice.	
Employment of staff Leadership and management, supervisions and appraisal The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; 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)(a)(b)(c)) In particular, ensure that staff and managers receive regular supervision and annual appraisals.	2 June 2025
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best	30 May 2025

interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care. (Regulation 7 (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)) In particular, ensure that children's views are sought regularly on decisions about the home and after incidents.	
Review of quality of care The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and	6 May 2025

make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b)(c) (5))	
Statement of purpose The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b)) In particular, the statement of purpose should reflect the management changes, children living at the home and staff working at the home.	20 May 2025

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: Lorraine Hughes

Registered manager: Karen Rusbridge

Inspectors

Chido Mangava, Social Care inspector
Sonata Brisley, Social Care inspector

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