

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.

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

At the time of the inspection, no 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.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 16 May 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/05/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
04/05/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
09/06/2021	Full	Good
04/02/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The care provided to children is consistently good. Children may live in the home permanently or enjoy a short break there. All children who spend time in the home receive support from a skilled and highly committed staff team. Staff are child-centred and ensure that children receive the individualised care and support that they need.

The manager makes sure that staff understand the needs of children who are new to the service. The time new children spend in the home before they stay for a short break is built up gradually. This is regularly reviewed and progresses at the child's pace. This helps children and their parents gain confidence about having a short break. Consequently, children appear settled and happy.

The relationships between the children and staff are positive. Some children have lived or spent time in the home over many years. Over this time, staff have built strong and familiar relationships with the children and their families. The staff know the children well. They are motivated to quickly get to know new children accessing the short-break service. This reduces anxiety about the new environment for the children. Consequently, children enjoy visiting and move between home, school and the short-break service with little anxiety.

Two young adults over the age of 18 currently live at the home, in accommodation separate to the children's short-break service. There are plans to support them to move to adult services. In the meantime, living at the home best meets their needs. Managers and staff work closely with partner professionals to assist in moving these plans along. They support these young adults to develop greater independence and work with them to reduce their anxieties about their futures.

Children are supported to maintain positive health and attend school. Staff work closely with families and partner professionals to ensure the children's needs are met. They attend all meetings relating to the children. As a result, staff understand individual targets for children and their role in helping children to reach them.

Staff ensure children are offered numerous and varied activities. They take the time to understand what is important to children and support them to pursue their interests. Staff help the children build and maintain new relationships, both inside and outside the home, through these activities. These diverse and new opportunities help build children's confidence, skills and self-esteem.

Children's achievements are celebrated, with their successes recognised on noticeboards and in their rooms. As a result, children's confidence and self-esteem have developed.

Staff maintain a strong emphasis on communication. They are skilled at using alternative forms of communication with children. This inclusive communication approach is used throughout the home.

The home is decorated to a high standard. Children's bedrooms are comfortable and are personalised to reflect their individual interests. This helps children to manage short stays away from their home. The separate living arrangements for the young people minimise disruption to their daily lives.

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

Children are safe and comfortable at the home. When children experience times of crisis, staff work hard to keep them safe by helping them manage their behaviours and feelings. When incidents do occur, staff manage these well. They use effective de-escalation strategies. Staff only use physical restraint to keep the child and/or others safe. All members of staff are trained in the safe use of restraint. Records relating to these incidents are detailed and appropriately reviewed by managers.

Children's vulnerabilities are understood by staff. When new children are referred to the service, a thorough assessment process takes place. Since the last inspection, a new positive behavioural support post has been created. The work of this member of staff has resulted in more in-depth behaviour management plans and bespoke interventions to support children in crisis. Staff and external professionals report that this has provided improved guidance and support to staff and improved consistency of approach for children.

The individual safety plan for one child failed to include crucial information about the strategies that staff should follow before using physical intervention. Without this guidance, new staff may be unclear about strategies to use. This has the potential to result in inconsistent approaches to support the child in times of crisis.

A small team of staff continues to care for one young adult who has been in crisis for many months. The staff are highly committed, often going above and beyond to support them. Various adaptations have been made to their home to ensure greater safety. However, the sink in their home was damaged and could pose a risk to them.

Children's health needs are managed effectively. Some children who spend time in the home have complex health needs that require them to take regular medication. There are clear and robust systems in place to manage the dispensing, storage and administration of medication. Consequently, medication errors are extremely rare.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The two registered managers have worked in the home for many years. They are organised and motivated. Both managers are visible in the home and have excellent insight into the needs of the children and young adults supported by the staff team.

The managers lead by example and have high expectations of their staff. The managers are strong advocates for the children. This has ensured children receive appropriate support for their health and well-being. Both are child-focused and dedicated to supporting the children to feel safe and happy.

The managers provide a supportive environment for staff. Staff speak positively about both managers and have built trusting relationships with them. One member of staff commented, 'I really appreciate how hard they work.'

Staff are provided with regular supervision and appraisals. However, the quality of supervision is variable. Some lack reflection on practice issues. The managers confirmed they have plans to improve staff supervision.

Staff receive a wide range of engaging training opportunities, which help them understand the specific needs of the children they care for. Staff members have attended specialised training on caring for children with learning disabilities and visual impairments. Two of the children who spend time in the home suffer with significant vision problems. Staff confidently described how their practice has changed as a result of this training, and how they have adapted the environment to better suit the needs of these children.

Care is taken to ensure that children are cared for by suitable staff. Pre-employment checks for staff are thorough.

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 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))	8 May 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are given the opportunity in supervision to reflect and develop their practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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 managers: Karen Rusbridge and Victoria Witham

Inspector

Jane Balfe, Social Care Inspector

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