

SC044880

Registered provider: Brighton and 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, one child was staying at the home for short breaks. One child and one young adult live long term in accommodation separate to that used for short breaks.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since June 2013.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 July 2025

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

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

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: 8 April 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: A compliance notice was issued at the last inspection for unsafe living conditions in part of the premises. This has since been addressed.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/04/2025	Full	Inadequate
16/04/2024	Full	Good
16/05/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
04/05/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

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

The home is judged as requires improvement, primarily due to shortfalls in leadership and management in relation to advocating effectively for children to ensure that staff are clear about how to support children with specific health and behavioural support needs.

Children play an active role in planning their daily routines. This includes picking their clothes and choosing activities for the day. However, children have limited opportunities to provide feedback and contribute to shaping and improving the overall service experience. Their feelings or observations of their behaviour following incidents are rarely sought or recorded. This limits children's ability to shape their care experience and restricts staff from assessing the effectiveness of post-incident support.

Staff generally support children to meet their health needs. However, current health plans lack clarity and consistency, with fragmented information that makes key information difficult to access. A new care plan format is being introduced, offering clearer, more accessible documentation of children's health needs.

Children are making progress in their personal, social and educational development. Staff recognise and celebrate each success, whether big or small. This helps to build self-esteem and motivates children. Recently, one young adult graduated from college and staff attended the celebration. Parents also highlighted the progress that children who access the short-breaks service are making. This includes an improvement in self-care skills, independent skills and encouraging hobbies that children enjoy.

Staff have developed positive relationships with children and their families. Regular coffee mornings that encourage open discussions are now in place. These informal gatherings help build connections and promote collaboration with parents. Annual summer and Christmas parties promote a community spirit and offer joyful experiences that bring families, children and staff together. As a result, there is increased parent involvement and a more inclusive, supportive environment for children.

Since the last inspection, more staff have been recruited. This has helped provide more consistency for children. The use of agency staffing has reduced and only a small number of agency staff, who know the children well, are used.

Children engage in a range of activities and hobbies that they enjoy. This includes swimming, dancing, eating out, shopping, mini golf, cinema and bowling. During summer holidays, staff book and plan activities and holidays for children in advance and which are in line with the children's interests.

Staff recognise the achievements of children by issuing an award for 'Star of the home', which helps celebrate every child for the little things they are doing well, like making

friends, trying new foods, or getting better with bath routines. This helps staff to notice positive changes and boost children's confidence.

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

Incident reports lack details of presenting behaviours. This makes it difficult to track behavioural changes over time and assess progress or assist new staff. Management oversight is not consistently present and rarely includes feedback or recognition of effective practice, limiting opportunities for staff development. Additionally, post-incident support for children and staff is inconsistently recorded, or sometimes omitted entirely. This means that there are missed opportunities to ensure that children experience a carefully considered and consistent response when in crisis.

Staff intervene with care and patience to support a child who is frequently in crisis and engages in behaviour that is self-injurious. However, the guidance for staff as to what to do if the child is injured is vague. This is a particularly complex situation for staff to manage. The lack of clear guidance from managers and the professional network creates situations where staff, despite best intentions, do not have the support they need to be satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that the child is as safe as possible.

On occasion, low-level physical interventions are used for brief periods to support children to stay safe. This is usually to help guide children away from harmful situations. There is an inconsistent approach to communicating with children following incidents. The records of incidents and physical interventions lack evaluation in sufficient detail to identify any learning, or to explicitly assess whether an intervention was best practice.

Staff are resilient and do their very best to support children through crisis. For one child, this has meant that they are able to maintain their short breaks and remain living with their family. Staff are informed by a multi-disciplinary team and implement a wide range of strategies to help children to make progress. For one child, this has helped them begin to re-engage with swimming lessons and artwork.

Children are supported to communicate using methods tailored to their individual needs. For example, one child has made notable progress in verbal communication, increasing their ability to engage meaningfully with others. Another child now uses an iPad to express their wishes and feelings, and staff consistently encourage this approach. This has empowered children to share their voices more confidently and independently.

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

Leaders and managers have made efforts to improve their effectiveness. However, these improvements are yet to strengthen their advocacy for children and improve care planning. Additionally, inconsistent management oversight continues to hinder staff from receiving clear and timely guidance, which has led to delays and inconsistencies in the support provided to children.

Management oversight of incident remains inconsistent. Managers introduced an online system to improve oversight. However, its application is not yet fully embedded in practice. In some instances, there is no recorded evidence of managerial input or support provided to children and staff following incidents. This limits the effectiveness of staff guidance and limits opportunities for professional development.

Managers and staff participate in children's meetings with a commitment to working with relevant professionals. However, this engagement has not always led to timely or effective support. In one notable case, a young adult experienced significant delays in their transition to adult accommodation due to lack of care planning. There is now a plan in place for the young adult.

Leaders and managers are improving how they support staff. Supervision and team meetings now happen regularly and cover important topics like whistle blowing, professional development, and safeguarding. This is helping staff to feel more positive and encourages open conversations. However, yearly appraisals of staff performance are yet to take place for staff.

Staff reflected on the previous challenges, which included staffing and communication. However, they highlighted improvements in leadership, training and team unity since the last inspection. A new team member shared a positive onboarding experience, describing the workplace as supportive and well structured.

Feedback from parents and professionals is highly positive. Parents express gratitude and trust in the care provided to children. One parent said, 'I feel very safe and reassured when she stays at the home that all her needs will be taken care off and she is happy, cheeky and content.'

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 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; 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 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)(b)) In particular, the registered manager should ensure that children's plans are clear on how children should be supported by staff to reduce harm. This requirement was reinstated from the previous inspection.	20 November 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;	20 November 2025

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (2)(a)(h)) In particular, ensure that management oversight is recorded consistently, and debriefs with children and staff take place following incidents to support children and staff to improve practice. This requirement was reinstated from the previous inspection.	
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans; and seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (c)(d)) In particular, the registered manager should ensure that clear plans are in place from the local authority social worker for children moving on to avoid drift, ensure that timely decisions are made and inform day-to-day care for children.	20 November 2025
In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care. (Regulation 7 (2)(a)(iv)) This requirement was reinstated from the previous inspection.	20 November 2025

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 and Hove City Council

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

Responsible individual: Lorraine Hughes

Registered manager: Karen Rusbridge

Inspectors

Chido Mangava, Social Care Inspector
Lee Kirwin, Social Care Inspector

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