

SC059853

Registered provider: Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide short-break care for up to six children with learning and physical disabilities. At the provider's request a temporary condition has been placed on the home to allow care to be provided for children with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2007.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 December 2024

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 24 January 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/01/2024	Full	Good
07/02/2023	Full	Good
22/02/2022	Full	Good
18/06/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

A knowledgeable, consistent and child-focused staff team continues to provide short-break care for children who have complex needs and disabilities. At the time of the inspection, twenty-nine children were accessing the service for short breaks. One child took time out of their day to visit the home and speak with the inspector. The child said, 'I love it here. I wish I could be here all of the time; the staff are good, and I've made friends.'

This continuity has supported children and their families to develop positive and trusting relationships with the staff. One parent spoke of the difference the delivery of parent support classes had made to her relationship with her children and how she would be 'forever grateful. I can't fault them; they have been fantastic to me'.

Children's visits to the home are fun, lively and varied. Children have enjoyed barge trips, swimming, parties and making friends. These positive experiences contribute to the children's growth and development. Each child has a 'my time away from home' book that captures their journey during their stays. These are filled with photos of them having fun and meaningful memories for them to look back on.

Children's introductions to the home are well planned and move at a pace suitable to the child and their family. Staff consider the individual needs of the children, using the input from social workers, teaching staff, health professionals and parents. This considered approach means that children only stay at the home when it is in their best interests to do so and when it is clear that staff can meet their needs.

Children's wishes and feelings are taken into account. Consultation using their preferred method of communication captures the views of children and their parents. These provide a clear voice in determining activities, resources and their short-break stays. One of the children's advocates said, 'It's one of the best places I've visited; they fight their corner, provide children with a voice and for children who are transitioning, they provide professional challenge.'

Children are helped to achieve greater independence, and they have been supported to go shopping, use public transport and apply for ID cards.

The staff are passionate about supporting children who will be transitioning to adult services and have begun working with the local authority transition team to encourage seamless support. Staff have recently arranged a coffee morning for families to discuss transition for children approaching adulthood. The manager invited transition social workers, and a resource booklet was created for families to advise them of services and support.

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

Children's complex health needs are met by an experienced and skilled staff team during their stay. Medication processes are safe, and the staff are trained in first aid. Experienced health professionals also support the home and provide necessary training to the staff.

Staff use positive praise and reinforcement, and children's successes are celebrated. This means that children are rarely given consequences in response to negative behaviour. However, the manager's oversight of consequences is limited and does not highlight who implemented the consequence or its effectiveness. This limits learning in the home.

Physical intervention is rarely required; when low-level intervention has been used, it has been appropriate. However, the staff member who has used the hold is not always clear in the records, and some records lack overall description and detail of the hold. A requirement made at the last inspection has been restated.

Children's risk and behaviour support plans are detailed, and in the most part, any changes in risk are carefully considered and plans are amended accordingly. However, for one child, there has been a change in behaviour, and as a result, overnight stays are currently suspended. The team has ensured that the child has continued to receive a level of support and consistency, and they continue to enjoy tea visits and activities. Leaders and managers have not updated the child's risk plan to detail these changes or the strategies they have implemented as a result of them working tirelessly alongside the behavioural support team.

Accidents and injuries have been responded to without delay, and there is evidence of the staff informing parents and professionals. However, information is not always clearly recorded, and records do not always reflect conversations that have taken place.

Safer recruitment is practiced, and children are suitably protected from unsafe adults.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by an experienced, well-established manager who is supported by a committed and dedicated staff team.

Staff, parents and professionals spoke positively about the leadership and management of the home. The manager is committed to developing the support for children. Staff receive regular supervision, appraisals, training and team meetings to ensure that they deliver a good standard of care. However, the manager was unable to demonstrate that he receives regular supervision. This does not ensure that the manager has adequate support or that his practice is reviewed.

The manager and staff are flexible to the changing needs of the children, ensuring that they always give the highest level of support. An example of this was a staff member changing their working hours to support a child who was experiencing significant challenges, allowing them to continue accessing the service. Another staff member supported a family with health appointments. This level of support demonstrates the staff team's investment in children enjoying positive experiences and support.

The manager completes a six-monthly quality of care review that details children's views and wishes. However, feedback from parents and professionals has not been sought, and the report does not fully evaluate the impact of care for children. This is a missed opportunity for the manager to evaluate the care provided to children effectively.

The statement of purpose describes the home's ethos and delivery of care; however, this has not been thoroughly reviewed and kept up to date. The document referred to a child who has not lived in the home since the last inspection, and it did not contain accurate information about staff.

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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)) Specifically, the registered person must ensure that children's risk and behaviour support plans detail all known changes to enable staff to keep children safe.	22 January 2025
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. 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 (1) (3)(a)(b))	22 January 2025
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (3)(b))	22 January 2025

Specifically, the registered person must ensure that the manager receives supervision in accordance with the organisation's supervision policy.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the terminology staff use is caring and compassionate, and an evaluation of 'language that cares' should be considered. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 21, paragraph 4.3)
- The registered person should ensure that the quality of care review report includes clear evaluation of the impact of the quality of care. Feedback should be sought from families and professionals in order to further evaluate the care provided. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 5.2)

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: SC059853

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Town Hall, Victoria Square, PO Box 29, Bolton BL1 1RU

Responsible individual: Paul Rankin

Registered manager: Neil Haydock

Inspector

Kelly McCurdy, Social Care Inspector

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