

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. A temporary condition was placed on the home to allow care to be provided for children with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager was registered in July 2017.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 22 September 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 February 2022

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: 18 June 2019

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
18/06/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
25/09/2018	Full	Good
22/11/2017	Full	Outstanding
13/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, short-break services were being provided to 32 children. There is one child living in the home who is not receiving a short-break service.

Children live in a genuinely caring environment where they are supported by dedicated staff who know them well. Insightful practice and strong care delivery are derived from good-quality care planning. As a result, children are making good progress.

One child in particular is making excellent progress, beyond the expectations of the staff, his family and other professionals. This is because staff really understand him. They carefully plan and monitor each small step and celebrate his successes, which has resulted in an enormous improvement in the child's self-esteem and aspirations. His mother said: 'The support that the staff have given to my son has really helped to raise his self-esteem and aspirations. I never thought that this could happen, and I cannot praise them enough.'

Improving consultation mechanisms capture the views and opinions of children and their parents. These provide a clear voice in determining activities, resources and the day-to-day running of the service.

Comprehensive healthcare plans are implemented effectively. Children receive the care they require, which means that parents are reassured. Staff encourage lots of physical activities and provide nutritional and wholesome meals which are tailored to meet the individual needs of children.

One child is not in school and receives a minimum number of educational sessions each week. The manager has persistently challenged this and has appropriately escalated his concerns to his line manager. There is no outcome at the time of this inspection.

One child was admitted to the home on an emergency basis. This is contrary to the admissions process described in the statement of purpose. The children's guide does not reflect the service being provided to this child. This has resulted in the child's understanding of the purpose of the home and what to expect being inhibited. Staff have worked well with the child to remedy this. One requirement and a recommendation have been made accordingly.

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

Staff work hard to create an environment where children feel safe. They maintain structures and routines in the home and are confident in applying boundaries and direction to the children. This contributes to children's feelings of safety and security.

Staff obtain as much information as possible about the needs, risks and vulnerabilities of each child before they move into the home, and this understanding develops further over time. Staff ensure that plans which guide them to keep children safe are kept current and clear.

Staff have a clear understanding of each child's vulnerabilities, and their practice ensures that children are kept safe. Staff know how to deal with any issues of a safeguarding nature that arise. They are aware of potential conflict between children and deal with this effectively through diffusing situations before they become an issue.

Measures are robustly implemented to meet the wider health and safety needs of children, staff and visitors. Equipment is regularly checked and serviced. The risk assessment that considers the location of the home includes information-sharing with wider agencies, such as health services and local police.

The home provides appropriate safety and security measures in line with the presenting needs of the children. The service demonstrates a balanced and proportionate response towards children's safety and their freedom of movement. Staffing levels provide safe supervision which is not oppressive. Children are not absent or missing from this home.

Current recruitment practice typically provides effective safeguards. Children are suitably protected from unsafe adults by the range of checks and vetting procedures undertaken.

Staff are skilled at implementing effective de-escalation strategies, which means that the use of sanctions is kept to a minimum. Staff understand when a child has become frustrated through being misunderstood and see children's behaviour as a means of communication. The use of physical restraint is limited. When such interventions are required, they are recorded carefully. However, children are not routinely debriefed and their response to the use of being held is not carefully monitored. A recommendation is made in this regard.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The suitably qualified and experienced manager registered in July 2017 and holds the relevant qualification and experience to fulfil his role.

There were two recommendations made at the last assurance visit. The first of these related to the manager's monitoring and audits of the service and the impact on his ability to identify the strengths and possible weaknesses of the service. At this inspection, some detail is missing from the manager's monitoring. The records of staff supervision are sparse and do not show that staff supervision is child focused or reflective. Two requirements are made in relation to these shortfalls.

A second recommendation was made in relation to record-keeping. The manager has ensured that records are kept to the required standard and are signed as appropriate. This recommendation has been addressed.

The manager is passionate about his role and is committed to the children. He has established a culture of high expectations and aspirations, and this ethos has become established in practice. Staff are ambitious for children, which is reflected in the quality of their planning, their detailed approach to working with children and children's outcomes. One social worker said: 'Staff are totally attuned to children's needs. They have come to know him well. They are realistic in their expectations of him. He has successfully taken small but highly significant steps while at this home and my aspirations for his future have increased dramatically.'

The manager advocates for children, challenging other professionals as necessary, to ensure that each child's interests are placed at the centre of practice.

A shortfall in the quality of reports provided by one independent visitor was successfully escalated and challenged by the manager. The current independent visitor acts as a critical friend who offers professional guidance and challenge. This means that any gaps in the quality of the service afforded to children are quickly identified and remedied by the manager.

A weakness was identified in staff's understanding of the implications and processes surrounding one child's legal status. This is a training matter, and a recommendation has been made in relation to this.

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
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)) In particular, this relates to ensuring that the statement of purpose reflects the purpose of the service and how it is provided.	1 May 2022
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff—	1 May 2022

are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(x)) In particular, staff must receive supervision that enables them to reflect on their practice and the impact this has on children.	
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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h)) In particular, this relates to the monitoring and auditing by the manager of all aspects of the service.	1 May 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should, as part of reviewing and revising the statement of purpose, review and update the children's guide, as necessary, and make sure that any changes are explained to children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.23)
- The registered person should ensure that any child who has been restrained is given the opportunity express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as is practicable, ideally within 24 hours of the restraint incident. The child's age and the circumstances of the restraint should be considered. Children should be encouraged to add their views and comments to the record of restraint. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.60)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

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

Registered Provider: Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: Ian Walker

Registered manager: Gillian Spencer

Inspector

Jacqueline Georgiou, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022