

SC061232

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home is registered for up to five children, aged up to 18, with social and emotional difficulties.

The registered manager has been in post since November 2019.

Visit date: 1 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 14 October 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Requires improvement to be good

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Children shared with the inspectors that they like staff and feel safe living at this home. Children did not raise any concerns about the care they receive from staff. Children appear to have warm and trusting relationships with staff, who understand their needs.

The home is clean and tidy, and plans are in place to fit a new kitchen. However, the home requires considerable redecoration and modernisation. Internal doors are not domestic in style, and have inappropriate locks and handles. There are fluorescent lights in the kitchen and landing and the lounge is not welcoming. This gives the home an institutionalised atmosphere that does not provide a warm and homely environment for children to live in.

Children are helped to spend quality time with their families. Staff ensured that this was maintained during the lockdown period by supporting with transport and enabling family to safely visit the home.

The manager is keen for children to develop their education and skills. All children living at this home have placements in place for September at school or college. One child has an apprenticeship with the council.

Children speak with staff about the care they receive and any worries they have. Children are supported to understand about the importance of education and staying safe.

The safety of children

Staff know how to keep children safe and risk management plans provide clear direction about how to do this. Staff are confident about child protection procedures.

Several incidents have occurred of children going missing from the home. Staff respond appropriately to ensure children are safely returned home. However, independent return home interviews are not consistently completed to gather children's views. The manager has not escalated this to senior managers in the local authority to address this shortfall.

The manager has not notified Ofsted of some significant missing-from-home incidents.

Staff have supported children well with their emotional and physical well-being during the lockdown period to minimise challenging behaviour. Children have been kept busy playing games, baking and taking physical exercise. There have been no incidents of physical restraint at this home or allegations against staff.

Leaders and managers

The manager is very experienced and is skilled at caring for teenage children. She

has moved from another home within the service to progress improvement in this home.

Children speak highly of the manager and describe her as very approachable. A social worker shared positive feedback about the helpful working relationship that she has with the manager and staff team to meet children's needs.

The manager consults regularly with children to enhance the quality of care they receive. Children are encouraged to share their views at their meetings and about their hopes for adulthood. Children are asked about how to decorate the home and to help buy their favourite foods.

Staff have provided consistent care to children during the pandemic and working patterns have been amended to reduce risks to children. A core team of staff has provided consistent care to children, with no use of agency staff.

Staff shared during the inspection that the manager provides strong leadership and has made many improvements to staff practice and the care provided to children.

Requirements under regulations 13 and 32 were issued at the last inspection and are not fully met. The manager shared that face-to-face training has been delayed due to the pandemic. In addition, a recruitment file sampled during this inspection highlighted that a second reference was not available for a staff member. Safer recruitment procedures require improvement and are a repeated shortfall which could place children at risk.

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
Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's need are met In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must ensure that— 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 (Regulation 5 (c))	30/11/2020
The quality and purpose of care standard 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 and uses 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— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(i))	30/04/2021
The leadership and management standard The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—	29/11/2019

Helps children aspire to fulfil their potential and promotes their welfare. The registered person must ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c))	
Fitness of workers The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(3)(d))	29/11/2019

Recommendations

- Examples of incidents that are likely to be considered serious affecting the welfare of a child include: a child being the victim or perpetrator of a serious assault; a serious illness or accident; a serious incident of self-harm, or serious concerns over a child's missing behaviour, particularly where the child is considered to be at grave risk due to age or vulnerability or where they have been missing for a considerable period of time and their whereabouts is unknown. This is not an exhaustive list and homes must assess each case individually taking into account any patterns of behaviour or unusual behaviour which may indicate an increased risk to the child. Homes should also consider the frequency of incidents and judge whether their cumulative effect makes notification appropriate even if in isolation each event would not warrant this. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.11)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC061232

Registered provider: Bristol City Council

Registered provider address: Bristol City Council, Director Of Legal Services, City Hall, College Green, Bristol, Gloucestershire BS1 5TR

Responsible individual: James Beardall

Registered manager: Joanne Mills

Inspectors

Anna Gravelle, Social Care Inspector
Carys Flain, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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