

SC061232

Registered provider: Bristol City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home is registered for up to five children aged up to 18 who have experienced adverse childhood experiences that have led to associated trauma and presenting complex behaviours.

The registered manager resigned in March 2019. She has recently resubmitted her registered manager application to Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 8 to 9 July 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 26 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
07/08/2018	Full	Good
17/01/2018	Interim	Not judged
21/11/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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; protect and promote each child's welfare; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult; make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—	05/08/2019

meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home; ensure that any care that is arranged or provided for a child that— relates to the child's development (within the meaning of section 17(11) of the Children Act 1989) or health. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iv)(vi)(ix)(c)(i)(ii)(d)(i)) *	
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. (Regulation 7 (1)(c))	12/08/2019
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— encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; and communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding. 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.	12/08/2019

(Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a) (ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(x))	
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; 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)(v) and (b))	12/08/2019
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 understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home and ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) and (2)(c)(f)(h))	12/08/2019
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))	12/08/2019
The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of	12/08/2019

abuse or neglect must, in particular, provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response.

(Regulation 34 (2)(d))

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- Where there is a possibility that a child will run away or go missing from a children's home placement, their placement plan should include a strategy to minimise this risk. If the child is looked-after, their care plan (arranged by their placing authority) should include such a strategy. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45 , paragraph 9.24)
- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45 , paragraph 9.30)
- Significant changes to a looked-after child's care, such as a change of placement, should only take place following a statutory review of their care plan chaired by their Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). The child should be actively involved in these important meetings and supported to express their views, wishes and feelings. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 57 , paragraph 11.10)
- When establishing the home, the registered person must ensure that it is suitably located so that children are effectively safeguarded and can access services to meet needs identified in their relevant plans (see regulations 12(2)(c)). Under regulation 46, the registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. Providers should refer to the non-statutory advice about the location assessment process: Children's homes regulation amendments 2014: Advice for children's homes providers on new duties under regulations that came in to effect in January and April 2014. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64 , paragraph 15.1)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Substantial shortfalls in leadership and management and failings in the help, protection and care provided to young people have resulted in a judgement of inadequate for this home.

The progress and experience of young people since the interim inspection have been negatively affected by poor leadership and limited aspirations of staff. Observations of interactions between staff and young people showed a lack of ability by staff to challenge illegal and inappropriate behaviours. Young people are not being taught about how to behave appropriately and respectfully.

Staff do not ensure that young people are respectful of their home or of others. Staff do not deal with issues such as substance misuse. The smell of cannabis was present throughout day one of the inspection from three young people's bedrooms. Staff did not intervene or challenge this behaviour. Two young people spent the day in bed and were not encouraged by staff to get up. Young people's lack of routine and low expectations of staff are contributing to poor experiences.

Staff do not engage young people to address issues such as sexually harmful relationships and antisocial behaviours through key-working sessions. Staff do not make sure that young people attend their review meetings. Staff are not enabling young people to express their wishes and feelings to help them understand or learn from these behaviours to prepare them for independence.

Staff and managers do not ensure that young people's needs are met in line with their statutory care plans. For example, a 13-year-old accommodated under a full care order has returned home to live with his father. Leaders and managers have not insisted on a statutory assessment or review to consider this change of placement or the child's needs. There has been significant drift because of this; the child is not engaging in education. This lack of oversight and action has affected the progress of this child.

The home has significant damage due to the aggression of some young people. Several broken windows and holes to walls need repair. Staff do not ensure that the home environment is welcoming to enable young people to feel cared for. Staff do not model high expectations and appropriate behaviours. Young people do not learn the necessary social and life skills to enable them to develop into respectful and law-abiding citizens.

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

Young people are not safeguarded effectively. One young person shared with the inspector that they did not feel safe living at the home because of the physical aggression of another young person towards others. Another young person shared with the inspector that they had allegedly 'smoked weed' in a staff member's car and gave video evidence of this. Staff are not providing sufficient guidance and boundaries to

ensure the protection of young people.

Staff lack professional curiosity and the ability to act consistently to prioritise the safety of young people. Staff do not check young people's sleeping arrangements when staying with friends or family or properly assess the potential risks of harm. Staff do not act to prevent repeated incidents from occurring and to help young people understand their behaviours. Young people are not being protected from potential harm and staff are not acting as good parents.

Risk management plans are poor. Managers do not ensure that they include actions to address the individual safety of young people. Some young people at risk of exploitation, with physically aggressive behaviours or who have carried knives, do not have behaviour management plans in place. Where there are plans in place, some of them are out of date. Staff are not confident or consistent at addressing these behaviours and young people's needs are not being met.

Managers do not keep detailed records of allegations or safeguarding incidents. Record-keeping is chaotic and difficult to review. Investigations into incidents including staff practice are not completed to a good standard. For example, one incident of a young person locking himself in a room and overdosing on paracetamol has not been investigated properly. This is because an evaluation and follow-up actions have not been concluded. Staff are therefore not able to learn from the incident or understand how to prevent them in future to prioritise the welfare of young people.

Managers and staff do not make sure that return home interviews take place when young people go missing. Staff do not go over and above to enable their prompt return. For example, staff do not always search known addresses or persuade young people to return to the home. Staff do not always collect young people when missing and often rely on police support to do so. Incidents of going missing lack manager review and oversight including clear actions and protocols to respond to incidents. Staff are not reducing episodes of going missing or understanding why young people are leaving home.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that safer recruitment processes are robust enough. Staff references are not verified properly and some references are missing and are of a poor quality. Reasons for leaving and gaps in employment history have not been properly explained or verified by managers. Identity checks are missing. Consequently, young people are at risk of harm, if recruitment processes do not prioritise the safety of young people from adults caring for them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leadership and management are weak. This home has been without a registered manager since March 2019. The previous manager has recently returned as interim manager. She has submitted her application to Ofsted. The lack of effective management has had a significant impact on the scrutiny and oversight of staff and a deterioration in the quality of care as a result.

There are significant shortfalls in the oversight and monitoring of the quality of care offered in this home. Managers are not tracking mandatory staff training to ensure that staff have the necessary skills and requirements to meet the needs of young people. Managers are unaware if some staff training has expired. This could affect the quality of care that young people receive.

Staff do not have consistent, good-quality supervision with clearly recorded actions for development. In addition, some staffing issues appear to need further follow-up and action. Consequently, staff are not supported well enough to improve their skills or ensure that a high standard of care is provided.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that the fire risk assessment has been updated. It does not consider young people smoking in the home or the associated risks. This means that young people and staff are potentially at risk of harm. The location assessment has not been updated since 2017. Local risks are not evaluated, nor strategies about how to reduce the impact on young people.

The quality of care review completed is ineffective. It fails to include young people's comments about their care. It does not evaluate staff training needs or safeguarding shortfalls. There is no development plan in place to drive improvement and better outcomes for young people. The quality of care is unlikely to improve because internal and external monitoring is weak.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC061232

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: James Beardall

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Anna Gravelle, social care inspector

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