

SC061232

Registered provider: Bristol City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people who have emotional and/or behavioural care needs.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 November 2017

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 inadequate

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: 20 December 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: Requires improvement

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- The home does not yet offer young people a homely environment in which to live. Many aspects of the home are institutional in appearance and unlike a family home. This is despite the best efforts of the staff to improve this shortfall.
- The home has not had a registered manager since January 2017. This is partly due to the delay in the local authority deciding what to do with the home and no suitable applicant being found. The operating local authority intends that in the future, the home will provide semi-independent living for 16- to 18-year-olds. However, following its closure from March to June 2017, the home was opened to provide an emergency placement for a young person because a suitable alternative was unable to be found.
- Members of staff who are newly appointed have undergone recruitment checks prior to their appointment but references are not being verified by telephone.
- The home does not have a clear development plan in place that clearly shows what steps will need to be taken to change the purpose of the home to supported living. The home does not currently have any young people placed.

The children's home's strengths:

- The acting manager and staff team provided safe and nurturing care for the young person who has now left the home and who had extremely complex care and mental health needs.
- The acting manager and staff team reported that they are well supported and trained.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/12/2016	Full	Requires improvement
13/09/2016	Full	Inadequate
28/06/2016	Full	Inadequate
25/01/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

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 registered person must ensure that a review of the quality of care is completed at least every six months. In particular, that a development plan for the home is created that is comprehensive and clearly states what the purpose of the home is to be and how this will be achieved. (Regulation 45(1))	22/12/2017
The registered person must appoint a person to manage the children's home. In particular, that a manager be appointed and registered without delay. (Regulation 27(1))	22/12/2017

Recommendations

For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments.

In particular, ensure that: the front door does not have a fob entry system and institutional appearance; lighted fire signs above doorways are removed; large locks on doors are removed; showers in en-suite bathrooms are able to be individually temperature controlled; and the institutional-style flooring is replaced. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards, page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Inspection judgements

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

There are currently no young people living in the home. A full inspection has been completed, taking into account the experiences and progress of the young person who was resident for five months and who left the home recently. Most of the records relating to this young person have been archived. Evidence to inform the judgement is

based on the few remaining records and discussion with the young person's social worker and the staff and manager.

The young person moved to the home as an emergency admission, when an alternative placement to meet their needs could not be found. The home was closed with the intention of changing the statement of purpose to provide supported accommodation for 16- to 18-year-old young people preparing for independence. This plan was put on hold when the young person was placed there.

The manager and staff team worked really hard to meet the very complex care needs of the young person. Agency staff were used to support the core staff team as the young person's increasing care needs meant that two staff were required to be with him at all times during waking hours. The young person initially settled well but as their mental health care needs increased, staff struggled to keep the young person, themselves and others safe. Increasing incidents of violence by the young person against their parent and the staff culminated in the young person being moved to a more secure environment.

The manager challenged psychiatric services to obtain a mental health diagnosis for the young person but was unsuccessful. Mental health support was obtained for the young person by the manager. The staff worked closely with other agencies. Strategies to manage the behaviour of the young person were broadly successful. The staff used minimal physical intervention to manage the young person's behaviour.

A nurturing and supportive approach was used by the staff to calm the young person. Initially, this approach was successful and the young person made some progress. The manager was proactive and obtained an educational health care plan for the young person and they began to engage with education. As the young person's mental health declined, the young person refused to engage in education and the staff struggled to manage the young person's behaviour.

The placing social worker of the young person is positive about the care provided by the manager and staff team. The social worker commented: 'My young person is very complex, and [the manager and staff] tried very hard at the home to manage their behaviour; they are a very troubled young person. [The staff] tried everything to help them and engaged well with their parent, inviting them to tea at the home. I found the staff full of unconditional positive regard; in particular, the manager worked very well with them.'

This is not a homely environment. The home is an older, large, purpose-built local authority children's home. The staff have done their best to make it more homely, by putting up pictures and decorating most areas of the home. The front door is institutional in appearance and has a fob entry system. There are large, unnecessary fire signs throughout the house. The en-suite showers cannot be individually temperature controlled and the flooring is institutional in appearance.

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

The staff kept the young person safe during their time at the home, despite many incidents and challenges. Effective links were made with the police and safeguarding professionals. Incidents of going missing from the home were well managed. If the young person did go missing, the staff attempted to find out where they had gone and followed the comprehensive missing from home procedures.

Before new staff members are able to work in the home, checks are carried out to ensure that they are suitable. Although two references are in place for new members of staff, it is not documented whether these references were verified by telephone.

Health and safety is well managed in the home, and the home provides a safe environment should a new young person be admitted. A comprehensive location risk assessment is in place that documents identified risks and how these will be minimised. All necessary checks, such as checks on gas and electrical systems, are comprehensive and up to date.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

There has not been a registered manager in the home since the previous registered manager resigned in January 2017, a period of 10 months. An acting manager has been appointed and has been managing the home in the absence of a registered manager. The home was closed for three months prior to the young person being admitted. The local authority that operates the home was deciding what the future purpose of the home should be. There are plans to alter the statement of purpose and use the home to provide a supported-living arrangement for young people aged 16 to 18 who are looking towards living independently.

There is not a comprehensive development plan in place for the home. It is not possible to determine how the change in the purpose of the home will take place and in what timescales.

Members of staff commented that, despite the staff being challenged by the behaviours of the young person, morale is high. The staff commented that they are well supported by the manager, supervision takes place regularly and they have received training in all the topics that they need to do their job effectively, such as safeguarding, physical intervention and first aid. While the home is empty, the staff team is being redeployed to other homes operated by the local authority.

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. 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: Bristol City Council, Director of Legal Services, City Hall, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TR

Responsible individual: James Beardall

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Tina Maddison, social care inspector

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