

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	25/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC061232
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Bristol City Council
Registered person address	Bristol City Council, Director of Legal Services, City Hall, College Green, BRISTOL, BS1 5TR

Responsible individual	Karen Gazzard
Registered manager	Tracy Connolly
Inspector	Clare Davies

Inspection date	25/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged requires improvement at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness. Leaders and managers do not ensure the safety and welfare of the young people in the home. Since the previous inspection in November 2015, there are 27 incident reports that detail how young people's behaviour has been regularly out of control. During this period, young people have physically assaulted each other, staff and members of the public. Young people have caused extensive criminal damage to the home and to vehicles. Young people are neither happy nor safe in this home. Young people have attempted to set fire to carpets and items in the home using aerosols as an accelerant. Young people blatantly smoke in the home in front of staff and an illegal substance has been removed by the police, having been confiscated by the staff. Young people have little regard to boundaries and the staff team's attempts to manage their behaviour. Consequently, the police are called to respond to young people's disruptive behaviour and this has led to one arrest. Ineffective strategies by leaders and managers result in young people being out of control. Some young people are saying that they do not want to be at this home. Written reports maintained at the home have recorded that young people have stated 'I don't feel safe'. The staff team states that they feel powerless in managing the young people's extreme behaviours. Staff lack the skills and confidence to impose consequences for anti-social behaviour. For example, as a result of the excessive number of incidents, only one sanction has been recorded. Assaults on staff and members of the community have not prompted any letters of apology. As a result, young people do not receive support and guidance on expectations about their behaviour. On the contrary, they observe a level of acceptance and despondency amongst the staff. To reduce unnecessary intervention in managing behaviour and criminalisation, the previous inspection recommended that the manager should agree with the local police force procedures and guidance on police involvement with the home. The	

manager reports that this joint working has not happened. Leaders and managers referred to a local protocol with the police dated 2010. However, this document is out of date and requires urgent review.

A risk management meeting on 18 December 2015 identified concerns about the unsuitability of the placement for a young person. Leaders, managers and the placing authority have not taken any effective action to deal with the needs and safety of all the young people at this home. The manager has expressed her concerns to her line manager. However, there is considerable delay in decision making to safeguard young people and young people are exposed to behaviours which staff are unable to manage, as a result.

The experiences and progress of young people are poor. Two young people are currently receiving a maximum of two hours of education a day and attendance at this reduced level is very poor and does not meet statutory requirements. Young people lack structure throughout the day. They are not provided with learning opportunities in addition to the two hours provided by tutors and often go out or watch television. These young people are not sufficiently supported with their learning. This impacts negatively on their ability to achieve academically and consequently limits their opportunities for future training and employment.

The staff team fails to meet the specific health needs of young people with particular reference to food and diet. On too many occasions, meals are low in nutritional value to meet a particular individual need. Young people are not always supported to make healthy choices and, as a consequence, for some young people, their health is at risk. Leaders and managers have failed to successfully implement nutritional advice to support young people. Staff lack consistency in their menu planning and purchasing of suitable food to maintain healthy options.

The manager has failed to adequately monitor the care practices in the home. She has failed to understand the impact that the significant safeguarding incidents are having on the progress and experiences of young people. The manager's monitoring report for the month of December 2015 is inadequate and fails to analyse the concerns. As a result, no action is taken to improve the quality of care and protection for young people.

In addition, the independent person who visits each month has failed to report sufficiently on the safeguarding concerns. The low level scrutiny of records lacks depth as shortfalls are not identified by the independent person. For example, a record of physical intervention has discrepancies between the account from the staff member and from the young person as to the type of intervention used. Neither the manager nor the independent person has explored this during their monitoring. In the absence of investigation, it is unknown if appropriate physical intervention was used.

The manager has promptly reported allegations of safeguarding incidents to the

police and the local authority to ensure that they are investigated according to local procedures. The manager and staff team liaise with many professionals to bring together support services for young people. However, two social workers reports that different staff attend young people's meetings, for example their reviews and that this hinders the continuity of discussion. Communication from social workers is not always passed effectively to all staff to ensure that all the team is made aware of key information. The two social workers report concerns that staff do not always adhere to the risk management plans and arrangements for young people to see their parents. Failure to follow the agreed care plans does not promote the safety and welfare of young people and causes confusion about contact arrangements between them and their families. Staff members who attend meetings do not always record a summary of the discussion and outcomes. This lack of information sharing contributes to the inconsistencies in care practice amongst the team and delays decisions being implemented.

Team meetings are held once a month; a member of the management team is not always present, leaving staff without clarity and direction. The minutes of these meetings record staff concerns about young people's behaviour, the lack of consistently good care practice across the team and the need to meet more frequently. Leaders and managers are failing to provide the guidance and support the staff team is seeking and requires so that they can safely care for young people.

The majority of the damage to the home has been repaired, yet some door closures remain broken. This negatively impacts on fire safety as they no longer close automatically. Some staff report that there are improvements to team working by supporting each other with challenges by young people. The independent monitoring visits have improved which reflects the recommendation arising from the previous inspection. However, the quality of the independent visitor's assessments requires improvement.

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people of either sex, with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is operated by the local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/11/2015	Full	Requires improvement
17/08/2015	Full	Inadequate
09/10/2014	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
29/04/2014	Full	Good

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
8: The education standard In order to meet the education standard children must be provided with full time education. The registered person must ensure that- (1) children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.	29/02/2016
10: The health and well-being standard In order to meet the health and well-being standard the registered person must ensure- (1)(a) the health and well-being needs of children are met (b) children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being and (c) children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.	29/02/2016
11: The positive relationships standard In order to meet the positive relationship standard the registered person must ensure that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships base on- (1)(a) mutual respect and trust (b) an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and (c) positive responses to other children and adults.	29/02/2016

12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure that *(1) children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. *(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure- (a)(i) 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. This relates specifically to the production of risk assessment documents to incorporate known risks and consider the impact of such risks in the care and supervision of children in order to provide protection. *(2)(b) 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; (d) that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. This relates specifically to the repair of fire door closures on children's bedroom doors.	22/02/2016
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must enable, inspire and lead a culture in relation to the children's home that- *(1)(a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential: and *(b) promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to- *(2)(f) 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	22/02/2016

quality of care provided in the home; *(g) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed by taking into account and acting upon- *(i) research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and *(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	
35: Behaviour management policies and records (1) The registered person must prepare and implement a policy (the behaviour management policy) which sets out- (a) how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and (b) the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. (3) The registered person must ensure that- (a) within 24 hours of the use of the measure of control discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a records made which includes- (iii) the date, time and location of the use of the measure (b) within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so- (i) has spoken to the user about the measure; and (ii) has signed the record to confirm it is accurate.	29/02/2016
44: Independent person: visits and reports (4) The independent person must produce a report about a visit which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether- (a) children are effectively safeguarded; and	29/02/2016

(b) the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.	
45: Review of quality of care (2) In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating- (a) the quality of care provided for children (b) the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and (c) any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.	29/02/2016

* These requirements are subject to statutory requirement notice.

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- The registered person should agree with their local police force, procedures and guidance on police involvement with the home to reduce unnecessary police involvement in managing behaviour and criminalisation of behaviours.(The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 47 paragraph 9.40)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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