

SC061232

Registered provider: Bristol City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a local authority. It is registered to provide care for up to five children with social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

There has been no registered manager in post since 1 December 2020.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care provisions on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 1 September 2021 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on our website.

Inspection dates: 26 to 27 May 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 14 October 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
14/10/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
08/07/2019	Full	Inadequate
26/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
07/08/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

The day-to-day experiences of children have not been consistently good, and not all children have made good progress. The home has been through a challenging time which led to three children leaving to live in other settings, because their needs were not being met in this home. The children currently living at the home are making progress, especially with developing their independent-living skills and with their education.

Children take part in a good range of activities. These include children's own interests and hobbies as well as the opportunity to try new things. Several of the children enjoy photography and their photos have been framed and displayed in the home. The range of activities has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, but staff have strived to provide children with alternatives. Several of the children have pets which they take very good care of.

The matching of children, when new children are moving into the home, has previously not been effective. A new process has been introduced that supports leaders and managers to make more appropriate decisions about which children will come to live at the home. This new process includes more input from the children who already live at the home and those who may be moving in, and a review of the skills of the staff team to determine whether they meet the needs of the proposed new child. This approach is proving effective.

Staff have not consistently developed strong and positive relationships with all children. However, the children who currently live here feel well cared for and safe. During this inspection, very caring and nurturing interactions were observed between staff and children, and the staff spoke positively about the children.

Children's plans require improvement. Currently these plans contain a lot of information to support staff in their care of the children, but lack clarity and are not

of a consistently good quality. This was identified by the independent visitor several months ago. A new format has been developed, but this has yet to be implemented for all children. Other records in the home are also not of a consistently good quality.

Children benefit from having access to a therapeutic team. This team provides individual sessions for children, as well as individual and group sessions for staff. Input from this team has helped the staff to reflect on and review the challenges they have been through, which has led to developments in practice.

Staff have worked hard within the limits of the layout of the building itself to provide children with a comfortable home. The kitchen has recently been refurbished and redecoration is taking place with the children's input, including choosing furniture. Each child's room is personalised. There is some maintenance which needs to be addressed. This includes improvements needed to the bathroom floor. There is also a lot of fire signage around the home, which detracts from the homely environment staff have created.

Professionals are very positive about the progress the current children are making. They said that staff place the children at the centre of their practice and children are safe and happy at the home.

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

Staff have not consistently kept all children safe, which has resulted in some children having to move to other homes. Leaders and managers have reviewed these events and lessons learned are being implemented to improve practice. This includes taking swift, robust action where poor staff practice has been identified. Children currently living at the home are safe.

Staff spoken to demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding. Safeguarding incidents are reported appropriately, but records of these incidents require improvement. They do not currently provide the whole story from disclosure to the resolution of a concern.

Behaviour management has not been of a consistently good quality for some children. At times, the staff have, inappropriately, called the police to manage children's behaviours. Leaders and managers have reviewed these incidents and are taking appropriate action. There is guidance in place regarding contacting the police, but this is not known to all staff. Since some children moved, there has been an improvement in behaviour management, with a significant reduction in the number of incidents. Incident records are generally of an appropriate quality. There is still some institutionalised language being used in records, but managers are continuing to address this.

Staff do understand the risks for each child, but have not consistently taken robust action to reduce the level of risk. Risk assessments are appropriate and there is

evidence of multi-agency work in this area. Leaders and managers have reviewed the approach to the management of risk. A new system has been developed and is being embedded in practice.

Since September 2020, there have been 40 missing-person events. Most of these related to two of the children. At times, staff did not consistently take enough action to prevent these incidents and to keep children safe. A small number of return home interviews have not been completed and there was an incident where staff failed to collect a child who wanted to return to the home. Leaders and managers are taking action to ensure that staff practice improves and there have not been any missing incidents since three of the children moved from this home.

Staff ensure that regular fire safety checks are completed. However, the fire risk assessment has not been updated since January 2020.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

There has been no registered manager at the home since 1 December 2020. The previous registered manager moved to one of the local authority's other homes and an acting manager was appointed. The previous registered manager has now returned to the home and is applying for registration with Ofsted. In January 2021, a new senior leader was appointed. They have been supporting the home and staff. Staff reported that they now feel listened to and valued by senior managers.

Leaders and managers reviewed the challenging time the home has been through and have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. They have learned lessons and taken action to address the weaknesses. However, these actions are yet to be fully embedded in practice.

Staff are very positive about their role and the children they care for. They feel supported both by their peers and the managers. Formal staff supervision requires improvement. Up until February 2021, supervision was sporadic. Since then, staff have been receiving regular supervision. However, the records of these sessions are not of a consistently good quality. They do not reflect the discussions held.

There are sufficient staff to meet the needs of the children. Staff have been undergoing additional training as well as mandatory training. Staff acknowledge that, although they have had training to understand child sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation, they required further training, which is being provided.

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 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 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 ensure that staff provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iv)) In particular, ensure that children's plans provide staff with clear, consistent guidance on how they will meet the child's identified needs.	31 July 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 helps children aspire to fulfil their potential, and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph 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) (2)(h))	31 July 2021
25: Fire precautions After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must take adequate precautions against the risk of fire. (Regulation 25 (1))	31 July 2021

In particular, the fire risk assessment must be reviewed and updated.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should seek as far as possible to provide a well-maintained and domestic-style home rather than 'institutional' impression in the home. They should review the requirement for health and safety signage and ensure that required maintenance is addressed swiftly. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that staff to build effective relationships with children that provide the foundations for managing any negative behaviour. Staff should have the skills and abilities to manage conflict, maintain constructive dialogues and react appropriately if challenged by a child in their care. In particular, ensure that the police are not used to manage young people's behaviours. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.14)
- The registered person should ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child. Plans which are agreed between the home and their placing authority must include details of the steps the home will take to manage and mitigate any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered person should ensure that when a child is missing from the home without permission, the procedures that are in place guide staff to support the child while they are missing, and on their return to the home, just as a good parent would. In addition, return home interviews need to be consistently carried out. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.28)
- The registered person should ensure that records of staff supervision are of good quality and reflect the discussions held. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 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: Chris Golbourn

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Wendy Anderson, Social Care Inspector

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