

SC065552

Registered provider: City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home is registered to provide care for up to five children who may have social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the inspection, there were three children living at the home.

There have been two registered managers at this home since the last inspection. The current manager has been at the home since February 2022, and recently registered with Ofsted in February 2023.

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 March 2023

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	requires improvement to be good
---	---------------------------------

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: 8 June 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/06/2021	Full	Good
26/11/2019	Full	Good
16/10/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
24/07/2018	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

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

Children develop trusting relationships with staff. However, changes in the staff team have disrupted the development of these relationships. Efforts by managers to minimise the impact of staff leaving have focused on securing familiar staff, by using regular agency and casual workers, alongside permanent staff. Over recent months, this has helped children to experience more consistency with their care.

Staff engage in thoughtful conversations with children regarding their experiences. They talk with children about their likes and dislikes and have reflective conversations after incidents occur to help children learn from events. However, there is a disparity in the quality and frequency of these conversations. For example, important conversations are not consistently followed up with children after initial refusal, limiting the use of reflection and restorative practice.

The programme of support for children preparing to move onto independence is not individualised, hindering their progress. The generic approach to supporting children who are preparing to transition to independence does not cater to individual needs. For one child, this limited their preparation as they moved onto semi-supported living.

Education is highly regarded by staff, who advocate for the children's best interests. For one child, this helped to re-establish their school timetable and a learning programme more aligned to their needs. Structured morning routines promote good school attendance for some children. Some of the children's outdated local authority education plans pose a challenge to their learning progress. However, the manager is taking the necessary steps to help address this short fall.

Staff promote the children's family time, and they develop meaningful relationships with family members. This has led to positive developments in some of the children's relationships with their parents over time. A parent said, 'The time together with my child increased, and our relationship improved.' Other family members and professionals consistently said that staff have a good understanding of the children in their care.

Children enjoy a variety of activities and are encouraged to pursue hobbies and interests. For example, one child thoroughly enjoys attending the army cadets, another child plays for a local rugby team, and another joined an ice hockey club after showing an interest in ice skating. This promotes self-esteem and provides children with opportunities to build friendships outside of the home.

Staff continue to lock internal doors, perpetuating an institutional atmosphere. The new team culture has yet to be fully embedded to prevent such practices and minimise the negative impact this has on the children's experience.

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

Behaviour management has not always been effective, with some incidents requiring police intervention, resulting in children being arrested. This is due to staff not always being attuned to the emotional distress of the children, reducing the effectiveness of their behaviour management strategies. Such incidents can evoke historical trauma for children and cause further emotional harm. Additionally, the quality of debriefs with staff and analysis of these serious incidents by managers lacks scrutiny. This hinders the learning for staff and potentially leads to further incidents.

Physical intervention is used to manage behaviour where necessary. However, the manager's evaluation does not always consider all elements of the incident, including physical signs of potential injury. In one case, the reasons for the hold were proportionate. However, staff did not complete an accident form after the incident and this was not addressed by management. The child's social worker did visit the child soon after the incident in response to the manager's request to do so. However, the failure to explicitly record injuries and the lack of scrutiny by the manager does not support staff learning and ensure safe practice.

The lack of a risk assessment for non-trained staff potentially increases the risk of danger associated with physical intervention practice. On one occasion, an agency worker assisted staff to safely hold a child; however, they did so without having the required training or risk assessment. For some of the permanent staff members, their physical intervention training is out of date.

There are inconsistencies in the recording of restraints, which could affect the evaluation of staff practice and the safety of children during such incidents. However, the frequency of restraints has significantly reduced over recent months, with the team implementing better strategies. There needs to be further development in the team's understanding about how trauma affects the children's coping abilities.

The recruitment checks for agency workers are not compliant with the Children's Homes Regulations. Managers do not request relevant references and have not conducted adequate risk assessments in response to historical information recorded on disclosure and barring certificates. This could compromise the safety of the children.

Concerns for a child's safety at home and in the community have been managed effectively through the use of a multi-agency safety plan. This helped to reduce the frequency of unsafe situations, self-harm and a reduction in substance misuse. The continued concerns for the child's well-being have been communicated to the child's new setting to promote the continuity of care.

The team benefits from a strong partnership with police officers linked to the home. This important relationship supports conversations with children regarding criminal behaviour, racial abuse and community safety. The officers help children to consider the impact of their behaviour from a different perspective.

Children missing from home is not a common concern. When incidents do occur, staff take appropriate action to escalate concerns and ensure the children's safe return home. The police officers linked to the home offer an independent safeguarding professional, for children to share their concerns with and reflect on the dangers of going missing.

Concerns arose for children around their online safety and the inappropriate use of social media. However, staff provided a balanced response by educating children about the dangers of sharing images, whilst increasing their risk management strategies and appropriate levels of control. This helps to reduce the associated risks of children being online.

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

The team has undergone several changes, resulting in disruption and instability. However, the new registered manager is positively influencing the team's culture and care practices. Staff report feeling optimistic about the future of the home and are passionate about providing the best care for children. Permanent staff numbers are increasing, while the use of agency and casual workers maintains staffing levels.

The psychologist linked to the home provides staff with a weekly forum to discuss the needs of the children. This is helping staff to develop an awareness of child trauma and improve the quality of care the children receive.

Staff receive practice-related supervision to support their personal and professional development, including reflection on the needs of the children. However, the quality of supervision for agency workers is unclear, hindering their development and contribution to the team.

The induction programme for new staff does not include a competency framework for the manager to evaluate their suitability for the role, relevant to their job description. This limits the manager's ability to ensure that new starters have the support they need to be successful in their roles.

The home is well decorated and has ample space for children to live and relax, with additional rooms for art, music and gaming. The dining area promotes children and staff to be able to eat together much like a large family. The children's bedrooms are personalised to their liking to help the rooms feel homely. There are large gardens within the grounds for children to play. However, the unkempt outside space and view of the derelict building next door detract from it being a comfortable home for children to live in.

Feedback from two children in the manager's quality of care review report, about not being listened to or having a choice, has not been analysed. As a result, subsequent actions have not been taken to explore the children's views and opinions. This overlooks the children's voice and the concerns they raise.

A serious incident was not notified to the regulator. Despite the incident being well managed, the rationale for not notifying the regulator overlooked the seriousness of the incident. This does not allow the regulator to have assurances that the decisions of the manager keep children safe.

The independent visitor to the home, who completes monthly external monitoring, is a former manager of the home. This raises a conflict of interest and reduces the visitor's impartiality.

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— 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)) The registered person must ensure that: the outside of the home is maintained in a way that keeps the space clean and free from debris; they take the necessary action to reduce the visual impact of the neighbouring derelict building that overlooks the back garden.	14 May 2023
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	14 May 2023

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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vi)) The registered person must ensure that there is a risk assessment for staff who do not have the required restraint practice training, so that the role of non-trained staff members during a restraint incident is known to all staff.	
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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)) The registered person must ensure that: their monitoring, analysis, and evaluation of staff's practice after serious incidents occur helps to identify shortfalls in	14 May 2023

staff's practice to support their reflection and learning from each event; there is oversight of behavioural incidents that occur, to ensure that staff are provided with the support to develop the skills needed to provide effective care for children; staff complete the relevant paperwork after an incident occurs to support the manager's oversight.	
The registered person must ensure that— any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (c)(iii)(iv)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the locking of internal doors is not part of staff's day-to-day practice, and that children have the autonomy to access areas of their home. Locks should not be on communal areas, and any that remain need to be clearly risk assessed and rationalised.	14 May 2023
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(d))	14 May 2023

The registered person must ensure that they have in place recruitment systems for agency staff members that are underpinned by safer recruitment practice.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c)) The registered person must ensure that agency workers receive practice-related supervision; and that the record of the supervision is legibly documented.	14 May 2023
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and 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 ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and	14 May 2023

within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	14 May 2023
The registered provider must appoint, at the registered provider's expense, a person ("the independent person") to visit and report on the children's home carried on by the registered provider. Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), the registered provider may not appoint the following as an independent person— a person who has, or has had, a connection with— the registered person; a person working at the home; or which the registered provider considers to give rise to doubts about that person's impartiality (for the purposes of producing the independent person's report – see regulation 44). (Regulation 43 (1) (3)(g)(i)(ii)) The registered provider must consider the appointment of the independent person due to their previous role at the home; and that the appointment does not give rise to a conflict of interest that would, or would appear to, compromise the ability of that person to reach a rigorous and impartial judgement of the quality of the home's care.	14 May 2023
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children;	14 May 2023

the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and

any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c))

In particular, the registered person must ensure that when children share their views and opinions as part of the quality of care review, any concerns raised are explored to ensure that children understand how their views and opinions have been taken into account, to help improve the quality of care they receive.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff use a bespoke programme of support to help individual children to prepare for a move from the home to live independently. This includes supporting the child to develop emotional and mental resilience to cope without the home's support and, where the child is moving to live independently, practical skills such as cooking, housework, budgeting and personal self-care, relevant to the child's assessed level of need. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)
- The registered person should ensure that newly recruited staff have their performance and development needs reviewed against a competency framework, that supports the manager to evaluate whether the staff member's performance safeguards children, and they meet the requirements set out in the relevant job description. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

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: SC065552

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

Registered provider address: City Hall, Centenary Square, Bradford BD1 1HY

Responsible individual: Picklu Roychoudhury

Registered manager: Jayne Bentley

Inspector

Aaron Mcloughlin, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2023