

SC397344

Registered provider: Birtenshaw

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a private organisation. It offers care for up to four children who may have been diagnosed with a learning disability and/or physical disability. There is a condition on this home that it must reduce the number of children by the number of young people aged 18 and over who are provided with care and accommodation.

There is an acting manager in post who is not yet registered.

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

We last visited the setting on 27 January 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 September 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: 27 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/01/2020	Full	Good
07/01/2019	Full	Good
01/08/2017	Full	Good
16/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

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

Children receive care from dedicated and committed staff who understand the children's needs well. This individualised care enables children to build trusted relationships with staff.

All children attend education regularly. For one child, there has been a marked increase in his attendance since living at the home.

Every day, children are encouraged to increase their levels of independence and develop their social awareness of others. For example, staff encourage children's participation in preparation of meals and support children to practise skills, such as helping to tidy up and prepare the table for eating. For one child, there has been marked progress in learning not to take others' food but instead to help serve the food to the plates.

Children's health needs are fully supported. The manager has been active in ensuring that appointments are kept and that specialist assessments from other agencies take place.

Children's contact with their families is respected and encouraged by the staff. Staff are active in building positive relationships with family members.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities, and they are supported to make active choices regarding their preferences.

Professionals report good communication from the staff and manager, and that information is shared in a timely way.

One child's progress has not been maintained. To address these concerns, the manager has advocated on behalf of the child and appropriately challenged other agencies. This has ensured that specialist intervention and services are in place.

Significant changes in the behaviour of one child have led staff to adopt a system of locking doors and keeping children apart. This means that another child and one young person are being restricted in their movement around the home. As a result, they are unable to make use of the outdoor space or sensory room when the child is in the home. This affects the timing of their choices and spontaneous decisions they may wish to make. It also ties them to routines that are determined by another child's needs.

Managers have not sought an early review of one child's placement in light of the restrictions that are in place. The effects of this delay on a child and a young person living in the home have not been fully considered.

One young person, who lives in the home, benefits from staff who know him well. Although he has enjoyed longevity of placement, there are no detailed plans with time frames to assist his smooth transition to an alternative provision.

At the last inspection, a recommendation was made with regards to the presentation of the home. This recommendation has not been met. The decor presents as worn and tired looking. The sensory room has minimal equipment, and the outside space lacks interest for children.

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

Children have secure relationships with staff who understand their vulnerabilities and complex needs.

Staff provide clear boundaries regarding acceptable behaviour and offer a patient approach to reinforcing learning in a sensitive way.

To keep children safe from other's behaviours in the home, staff regularly lock an internal door at night. To reduce the number of incidents and to ensure that children and the young person are safe, they are kept separate. As a consequence, there is daily restriction of movement and at times they have had to eat meals in their rooms.

Staff have, on occasion, used techniques to restrain a child using methods not recognised by the company's adopted approach. Recordings by staff are not always clear why these methods have been used, nor have they benefited from managerial review.

Recruitment of staff working in the home is not rigorous. Some references have not been verified, and managers do not have a full overview of the agency staff's safe-recruitment checks.

Managers are unclear why some recommendations contained in the home's fire risk assessment have not been adopted. In addition, children have not had opportunity to practise their personal evacuation plans.

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

The previous registered manager resigned her registration as manager of the home in May 2021. The current manager has been in post since this time. She is aware of the shortfalls and weaknesses and has commenced with plans to address them.

She has acted as a strong advocate for one child to receive the assessments and services he requires. Professionals spoke positively about the manager and her role

in meetings. Professionals consider that any concerns are brought to their attention promptly.

The staff team is committed to its role, and there has been limited staff turnover in the last 12 months. However, the additional needs of one child have led to an increase in numbers of staff required on shift and in turn the use of agency staff. The manager has liaised with the agency and sought to ensure that the same staff are used to cover these additional staffing needs to improve consistency.

Staff that were spoken to consider the manager to be open and supportive, and they receive regular supervision. However, supervision and team meetings do not always address children's needs, their plans or progress.

Managers have not reviewed the impact that restrictions in the home have on the welfare of the children and young person. Some of those living in the home do not require such restrictions as part of their care. Managers have deferred this review, to await the outcome of specialist assessments for one child. There is no agreed time frame for this delay. In the interim, managers are without clear assurance that the children and young person continue to receive care that meets their needs.

Some staff recordings are not clear with regards to why physical interventions have been necessary nor where staff were positioned when one young person managed to elude staff restrictions. The manager is aware of these shortfalls and the improvements necessary to provide clear accounts of staff actions. In addition, the manager is aware that staff need additional training on the electronic system to ensure that records are comprehensive.

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, the 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 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 staff— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(vii)) This specifically relates to the provider ensuring that the home's decor is maintained to a high standard and that there are suitable and varied sensory toys and equipment in the sensory room.	31 October 2021
The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use 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; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;	31 October 2021

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. (Regulation 35 (2) (3)(a)(ii)(v)(b)(i)(ii)) In particular, that records by staff are clear and that the manager regularly reviews the practice of staff, and the impact on children is fully evaluated.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose; that arrangements are in place to— manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority; that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if— the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(a)(b)(ii)(iii)(e)(i)) This specifically relates to children's restriction of movement in and around the home and the impact of these arrangements on all children and young people. In addition, that the registered person ensures that plans are formulated for young adults to transition from the home.	<i>31 October 2021</i>

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 fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care for 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 developments of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(e)(f)) This specifically relates to the provider ensuring that children are not cared for by a high number of agency staff. In addition, that the manager evaluates and reviews the day-to-day experiences of children in the home as a result of restrictions of movement.	31 October 2021
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)) This specifically relates to references from previous employers being sought and verified, identity documents being scrutinised, and that agency staff undergo the same satisfactory checks.	31 October 2021
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home— paragraph (1) does not apply; and the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for	31 October 2021

article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home.
(Regulation 25 (2)(a)(b))

This specifically relates to a review of the home's fire risk assessment and recommendations contained in that report. In addition, that children have opportunity to practise and understand their personal evacuation plans.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the electronic system used by the provider to keep children's records is fully understood by staff and that suitable training is made available. ('Guide to the children's homes regulation including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are afforded opportunity to discuss the needs of each child and reflect on their practice in supervision and team meetings. ('Guide to the children's homes regulation including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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: SC397344

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Birtenshaw

Registered provider address: Darwen Road, Bromley Cross, Bolton BL7 9AB

Responsible individual: Julie Barnes

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Mandy Williams, Social Care Inspector

Pauline Yates, Social Care Inspector

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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

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