

SC397344

Registered provider: Birtenshaw

Interim 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 is registered to provide care for up to four children who may have been diagnosed with a learning disability and/or physical disability.

The manager has been in post since May 2021 and was registered with Ofsted on 31 December 2021.

Inspection date: 27 January 2022

Date of last inspection: 13 September 2021

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

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 to be good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness.

At the time of this inspection, two children and one young person were living in the home. Since the last full inspection, the manager has registered with Ofsted. The changes that she had planned to implement to improve practice in the home are not yet embedded. Robust monitoring systems are not in place, leading to significant shortfalls in the monitoring and oversight of the service. A requirement has been made under regulation 13.

The sleeping arrangements for one child are not satisfactory. The manager was unable to provide evidence of efforts made to resolve this situation, and safeguarding risks had not been fully considered. Children's risk and behaviour management plans do not reflect key information about children's individual risks, and they do not routinely explore the risks that children pose to each other. Plans are not regularly reviewed and do not always include strategies for the staff to follow to keep children safe. A requirement has been made under regulation 12.

Limited progress has been made in relation to planning for children leaving the home. Although the manager was able to provide evidence of some communication with local authorities and other services with regards to securing information and planning for children, these efforts have not been effective. A requirement previously made under regulation 14 has been restated.

Children's records are not maintained to a satisfactory standard. The manager and staff require further training to use the organisation's electronic recording system effectively. Key documents could not be located during the inspection and discrepancies were identified. A requirement has been made under regulation 36.

Concerns identified at the last inspection relating to the use, and recording of, physical interventions have not been addressed. Records are unclear and have not been completed within the regulatory timescale. This reduces the opportunity for the manager to ensure that practice is robust. A requirement previously made under regulation 35 has been restated.

Children are routinely discussed during staff supervision. However, the discussions are often limited to one child and do include opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice. Records do not contain details about the content of the discussions. The frequency of supervisions are not taking place in line with the organisation's supervision policy. A requirement has been made under regulation 33.

Agency staff continue to be used alongside key staff and staff who are employed by the organisation. This negatively effects the continuity of care for children as they are not always cared for by staff who know them well. A requirement previously made under regulation 13 has been restated.

Robust recruitment practices are in place to ensure that all staff undergo safer recruitment checks. The requirement previously made under regulation 32 has been met.

Improvements have been made to the decoration and furnishings throughout the home. However, some work remains ongoing, and there is an action plan in place to further improve the standard of the home.

The recommendation from the home's fire risk assessment has been adopted in the home. Children are routinely involved in practising their personal evacuation plans.

Despite the concerns identified, the children are continuing to make progress and appear settled. They benefit from strong attachments to key staff. Risks are mitigated as key staff know the children well and are responsive to their behaviours. One social worker observed the interaction between a staff member and her child and said: 'The member of staff was exceptional with him. He was calm, collected and knew him inside out. He was highly vigilant to him, but appeared relaxed with him.'

Practice changes and risk assessments regarding the restriction of movement in the home have been implemented. However, the strategies being used to manage the behaviours of one child are having an impact on other children. These negative effects are not always fully considered. The members of the leadership team are continuing to review these strategies, and plans to admit a fourth child are currently on hold.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/09/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
27/01/2020	Full	Good
07/01/2019	Full	Good
01/08/2017	Full	Good

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 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; 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 completed within the require timescale and that the manager regularly reviews the practice of staff and the impact on children is fully evaluated. This requirement is restated.	31 March 2022
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.	31 March 2022

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 the registered person ensuring that all plans for children are available, regularly reviewed and relevant to each child. In addition, that plans are formulated for young people to transition from the home.	
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 promoted 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 in the home; and	31 March 2022

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(e)(f)(h)) 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 and utilises monitoring and review systems to continually develop practice in the home. This requirement is restated.	
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 necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; and 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(b)) This specifically relates to ensuring that satisfactory sleeping arrangements are in place for all children. In addition, that children's risk management plans are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect children's current risks and include strategies for staff to follow to keep children safe.	31 March 2022
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	31 March 2022

This specifically relates to ensuring that the electronic recording system used by the provider is fully understood by all staff and that suitable training is made available to ensure that staff record information in a way that is clear and not open to misinterpretation.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)) This specifically relates to ensuring that staff supervision takes place in line with the organisation’s supervision policy and provides opportunities for staff to reflect, and focuses on the needs and progress of each child. In addition, that these discussions are recorded in supervision records.	31 March 2022

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they continue to implement plans to improve the condition of the home. This specifically relates to improving the garden area, replacing carpets, lounge furniture and window coverings and ensuring that children’s bedroom furniture meets their sensory needs. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations, including the quality standards’, page 14, paragraph 3.9)

Information about this inspection

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.

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: Tanya Lees

Inspectors

Caroline Bertram, Social Care Inspector

Paul Scott, Social Care Inspector

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