

SC422464

Registered provider: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by the local authority. The home provides care for up to 10 children. In emergency situations, the home can provide fulltime care for up to two children with learning and/or physical disabilities, some of whom have complex health conditions. The home also provides care through short-break arrangements for up to eight children with learning and/or physical disabilities, some of whom have complex health conditions.

On the date that the inspectors visited, three children were at the home for overnight stays and one child was having their first tea-time visit. No children were permanently living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in 2011.

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 October 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 3 October 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/10/2023	Full	Good
24/10/2022	Full	Good
28/09/2021	Full	Good
13/01/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children's short breaks provide them with the time to relax and enjoy their stay. Children are cared for by staff who provide individualised care with high levels of nurture. During the inspection, the inspector observed all four children and spoke with two of them.

Staff encourage children to share their views. Staff have progressed children's requests to personalise their bedrooms and for specific activities and toys. These actions provide individualised care for the children and contribute to them enjoying their stay.

Staff have been unable to help all children to understand how to make a complaint. However, an independent advocate does visit the home for the children. The staff provide the children's parents and carers access to the children's guide and newsletters. This means significant others have an understanding around the quality of care and opportunities and experiences available to the children.

Staff have a good understanding of the children's complex health needs. Children have individual placement plans detailing their care needs. Staff work with a range of specialists including occupational therapy, diabetics services and children's mental health services. One professional said, 'Staff are knowledgeable and skilled at what they do and they always put the child first.'

Children's stays are planned. Staff talk with each child's parents and carers to gain an update regarding the child's needs and personal care before their stay. These actions promote positive partnership work with parents and enable staff to offer the children consistent and personalised care.

Children access a variety of social opportunities and activities. Children enjoy playing in the garden, sensory play, listening to music and craft activities. Staff support children to understand positive events such as the Paralympics. Children also enjoy trips to the local park and restaurants. Staff spend time with children supporting them to develop their independence in line with their individual needs and plans. Children have fun, develop social skills and are part of the wider community.

The home is clean and welcoming for children. It is equipped to provide children with space for stimulation and relaxation. There are areas of the home that need maintenance and repair, including the sofas. A fire door also requires replacement. Leaders and managers have taken actions to ensure that children are safe to stay in the home and that relevant health and safety legislation is met until this issue is resolved.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Children are relaxed around staff. Staffing ratios are high, to give the children the necessary supervision and engagement. Parents said that they feel their children are safe in the home.

Staff understand the children's risks and care needs. Risk assessments are detailed, providing information of potential risks for children, as well as triggers and behaviours for staff to be aware of. Children's plans are detailed and highlight the children's needs and the action for staff to take to keep children safe.

Staff offer children nurturing support during emotionally difficult times and use de-escalation techniques in line with the children's plans. Staff physically hold children as a last resort to prevent children from hurting themselves and others. This support is proportionate, and staff try to talk with children after incidents to determine any impact. The physical restraint incidents are recorded and reviewed by the registered manager.

Children do not go missing from the home. In the event of this happening, staff have access to procedures and understand the actions that they should take. If deemed necessary to enhance children's care, audio surveillance monitoring equipment is used in the children's bedroom. This is with the agreement and consent of the child's parents and social workers.

Staff are aware of actions that they should take if there were concerns about staff practice. The home has links with the local authority designated officer and staff seek advice when deemed necessary. Safer recruitment procedures are in place, which can help keep children safe.

There are gaps in children's records. Specifically, these are in relation to one child's record of self-injurious behaviours. Records indicate that the child was supported in line with their plans, but the timeliness of medical support for the child was unclear. The shortfalls in records impact on management oversight, which means the registered manager is unable to be assured that actions are taken in a timely manner.

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

The registered manager has monitoring systems in place to assist their understanding of the quality of care to children. However, these systems have not been effective in highlighting the shortfalls and gaps noted during the inspection.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that all staff have access to regular supervision. This means that staff are not provided with individual support to reflect on their own development and practice. New staff have not been supported in line with the local authority's probation procedures and there are gaps in their induction. This means new staff are not being consistently supported to learn and develop within their role, and reflect on their care practices and children's needs and progress.

Staff complete mandatory training, but gaps in records suggest that some staff need to update their first-aid training. The registered manager has not assured that all staff have training and practice knowledge about self-injurious behaviours and specialist communication skills such as Makaton. On this occasion, these gaps have not impacted on the care offered to the children. All staff need the opportunity to develop their skills to enable them to communicate effectively with the children and understand their individual needs.

Some children have individual fire evacuation plans. However, leaders and managers have not ensured that staff support children to be involved in fire evacuations in line with the home's procedures. Managers cannot be assured that staff and children have all of the necessary information to evacuate safely. The registered manager does ensure that there are sufficient staff to support children's safe evacuation.

The staff talk about feeling supported by the registered manager. Staff work well as a team and are all committed to caring for the children. Staff are supported to have regular team meetings. This provides the staff with the opportunity to reflect as a team on the children's care and staff's own practice.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered persons 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must— take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home; ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)(d))	8 November 2024
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— 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 have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a) (2)(a)(c)(f)(h))	29 November 2024

In particular, the registered person must ensure that records of significant incidents are clear regarding the actions staff take and the information-sharing with significant others.	
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction; ensure that each permanent appointment of an employee is subject to the satisfactory completion of a period of probation; and The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (1)(a)(b) (4)(b))	29 November 2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that repairs and damaged furnishings in the home are fixed and replaced in a timely manner to ensure that the home is homely, and that all relevant health and safety actions are progressed. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: SC422464

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Westgate Plaza, Westgate, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S70 2RD

Responsible individual: Lisa Vaux

Registered manager: Diane Wharton

Inspectors

Gina Lightfoot, Social Care Inspector
Jo Cansfield, Social Care Inspector

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