

SC454484

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 run by a local authority. It is registered to provide care for up to five children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. There were five children living at the home at the time of the inspection visit.

The manager is new in post and is not registered with Ofsted.

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

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 July 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and widespread failures that mean children are not protected and their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 2 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/03/2020	Full	Good
31/10/2018	Full	Good
12/09/2017	Full	Good
08/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

The overall experiences and progress of children are judged to be inadequate because there are serious failures that mean children are not protected and their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Children are not encouraged by staff to develop hobbies and interests or engage in positive activities outside of the home. This impacts negatively on their childhood experiences and hinders healthy social development.

Children's care plans are of a poor quality. They do not fully capture children's needs or give clear guidance for staff to follow. Children's views are not contained within their care plans. This impacts on the quality of individualised care that children receive.

Case records are difficult to follow and are not up to date. Records are repetitive and do not contain the children's views. This ineffective recording practice means that some staff cannot recognise and respond to children's complex needs.

The condition of the home is extremely poor. Some areas of the home are unsafe. The children's bedrooms are dirty, and one bedroom had no furniture other than a bed. One child told the inspector that his bed has been broken for over six months. The poor condition of the home does not provide children with an environment where they can feel safe, valued, or have a sense of belonging.

The inspector identified that some food items are routinely kept in a locked cabinet in the staff sleeping room. This practice does not promote a homely and loving atmosphere for children.

There are some examples of direct work with children. However, this is not consistent for all case files. There is little evidence of direct work on independent living, personal safety and risk. This means that there is minimal evidence to show how staff support children to identify risks or help them to share their views.

The children who have lived in the home for a long period of time are making good progress from their starting points. For example, two children have made progress in their education and are about to start college.

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

Children's missing from home protocols are not up to date. One child did not have a protocol in place despite a history of going missing, and two others had photographs on them which were significantly out of date. In addition, the protocol does not give clear direction or strategies for staff to follow. This means that staff do not have an

accurate understanding of what action to take in the event of a child going missing from the home.

The inspector found inconsistencies in how staff respond to children's missing from home episodes. There have been delays in reporting and efforts to find the children have been poor. Children have not consistently received support when they have returned to the home, and missing from home reports lack management oversight. This has placed children at risk of significant harm.

Children's risk assessments are not up to date and some information is missing. The management oversight of risk assessments is poor. Currently, staff do not have all the necessary information and strategies to keep the children safe.

Incident reports are not always completed. On three separate occasions, the police were called by staff in response to a child's behaviour. However, there were no incident reports completed in relation to these events. Poor recording practice impacts the manager's ability to identify patterns and trends and reduce the likelihood of reoccurrence.

The staff have physically intervened when children are at risk of causing harm to themselves or others. This practice is proportionate. However, the recording of physical interventions is poor. For example, there is no evidence of debriefs and managerial oversight and evaluation is lacking. This means that the manager is not able to identify patterns, trends or triggers leading up to the intervention.

The impact risk assessment for children is poor. There is no consultation with social workers for the children already living in the home. Furthermore, the assessments do not sufficiently evaluate how the home intends to meet those specific needs and mitigate the risks when making new placements alongside existing residents.

Care planning for some children has been poor. For example, introductions to the home did not take place for two children recently admitted to the home. This contributed to uncertainty and led to both children going missing from home on the day they went to live there.

Staff training is significantly out of date. Staff do not have up-to-date safeguarding, first aid, behaviour management or fire safety training. Not all staff have attended medication training. However, on occasions they have been responsible for administering medication. Staff reported that they have been unable to access training due to staff shortages. This lack of up-to-date essential training leaves children at risk of significant harm.

There have been occasions where there has been insufficient staff to meet the children's needs. For example, when one of the children went missing from the home staff were unable to look for them due to insufficient staff cover. This leaves children at risk of harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The manager is new in post and is not yet registered with Ofsted. The manager had a good understanding of the home's weaknesses and acknowledged many of the concerns and failings. The manager has escalated some of his concerns. However, failure to take decisive and effective action has left children at risk of harm.

The inspector found that leaders and managers do not operate the home to meet the aims and objectives of the statement of purpose. This is because staff do not have sufficient skills, experience and qualifications to create a safe environment.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that staff benefit from regular supervision and team meetings. Supervision does not address safeguarding issues as a standing agenda item. This lack of support does not enable staff to reflect on and improve their care practice.

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that there are effective systems in place to monitor the quality of practice and record-keeping. For example, the statement of purpose has not been updated since June 2018, and the annex A was not available at the beginning of the inspection. When provided, it had some inaccuracies. In addition, leaders and managers have not submitted a regulation 45 report as required by regulation. This hinders the regulator's ability to have appropriate oversight of the home.

Regulation 44 reports completed by the independent person do not meet the required standard. Consultation with children, families and professionals has been minimal. Furthermore, the significant concerns raised at this inspection have not been identified. This lack of independent scrutiny does not provide Ofsted with the information required to monitor the home.

Regulation 44 visits are not conducted by an independent person. Currently, the independent person is the manager of the local authority's independent reviewing officers. There is a conflict of interest between these two roles because they have managerial responsibility for staff who review and oversee children's care planning. This lack of independent scrutiny impacts on the quality of care that children receive.

Poor management oversight and the failure to take appropriate action has had a detrimental impact on the quality of care, safety and well-being of children.

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 enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— develop the child's interests and hobbies; participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child's interests and preferences; and make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community; and that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child's interests and hobbies. (Regulation 9 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))	24 September 2021
* 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; 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;	24 September 2021

that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(b)(d))	
* 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. use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h))	24 September 2021
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.	24 September 2021

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 staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(f))	
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	24 September 2021
The registered person must ensure that— 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 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)(b)(i)(ii) (c))	24 September 2021
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. If the registered provider carries on more than one home, the registered provider may appoint the same person as the independent person for all or any of those homes. Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), the registered provider may not appoint the following as an independent person—	24 September 2021

if the registered provider is a local authority, a person who is employed by that local authority in connection with the carrying on of the authority's social services functions (as defined by section 1A of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970(a)) relating to children;

if the registered provider is not a local authority, a person who is employed for payment by the registered provider;

a person involved in preparing the care plan of any child placed at the home, or a person responsible for managing or supervising that person;

a person responsible for commissioning or financing services provided by the home;

a person with a financial interest in the home;

the responsible individual (if one is nominated); or

a person who has, or has had, a connection with—

the registered person;

a person working at the home; or

a child, 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).

An employee of the registered provider is not, by reason only of that employment, disqualified under paragraph (3)(a), (b) or (g) from appointment as an independent person if the employee is employed solely to examine and scrutinise critically—

the way that a home is carried on or managed; and

the quality of care provided for children.

If the registered provider is a local authority, a person appointed by the authority as an independent reviewing officer is not, by reason only of that appointment, disqualified under paragraph (3)(a), (c) or (g) from appointment as an independent person in relation to a home carried on by that authority or any other authority.

The independent person must declare any actual or potential conflict of interest (whether of the type mentioned in paragraph (3) or otherwise) to the registered provider without delay and, if reasonably practicable, before conducting a visit to the home. If the registered provider becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest in relation to the independent person before or during the independent person visiting the home (see regulation 44), the registered provider must— make arrangements to cancel the visit without delay; and appoint a different independent person to visit the home. (Regulation 43 (1)(2)(3)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e))(f)(g)(i)(ii)(iii)(4)(a)(b)(5)(6) (7)(a)(b))	
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires. A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced. The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home	24 September 2021

and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44 (1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(4)(a)(b) (5))	
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; 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. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(3)(4)(a)(b) (5))	24 September 2021

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: SC454484

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Gateway Plaza, Sackville Street, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S70 2RD

Responsible individual: Jonathan Banwell

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Brian Wood, Social Care Inspector

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