

SC486606

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 home is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides care and support for up to four children aged between 10 and 18 years who may have social and emotional difficulties.

This home provides emergency, short-term or medium-term placements.

The registered manager has been in post since June 2020.

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 November 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	inadequate
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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: 3 August 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: compliance action was taken against the home's provider on 3 August 2021 as inspectors found serious and widespread concerns about its leadership and management, and the protection of children. At the monitoring visit on 7 September 2021, the inspector found that the provider had made progress and the actions set out in the compliance notices were met.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/08/2021	Full	Inadequate
09/03/2020	Full	Good
20/11/2018	Full	Good
04/07/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Children are being cared for by a committed staff team. However, the care provided to children is not yet good enough. The progress children make is limited because their needs are not suitably matched to the home or the care that staff can provide.

A recent decision to move a child into this home was made by the responsible individual. The matching and suitability of a child was overlooked, and admission agreed outside of the scope of the home. The expectations of how staff provide day-to-day care are not aligned with supporting children to make progress.

Staff struggle to engage children in education. Children have a tutor in place during the week, which has been arranged with the local authority. However, despite the endeavour of staff to engage them, children learning with the support of the tutor is rare.

Children have access to all the local health services. Emergency medical intervention is also sought when needed. Staff work with a range of professionals, including a child psychologist. The group of professionals assess the children's needs and formulate plans to meet these needs. However, the impact that the staff and others have is limited because children are not suitably matched to this home.

Staff have regular conversations with the children. Staff are consistent in their approach and they are responsive to the children's needs; for example, talking with children about keeping safe in the community, emotional well-being, and the children's future plans. Children also have conversations and help from other professionals, such as the youth offending team and the police. Children are able to share their views and receive guidance and support on their current needs.

Staff offer children the opportunity to take part in positive activities. These have included go-karting, bowling and going to the gym. However, the children's engagement is limited.

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

The team's ability to reduce the risk of harm for children is limited because children are not living in a home that is best suited to their needs. The high level of staff supervision is helping to manage the risks children take from escalating while care planning occurs for their future. For example, staff supervise children when in the community, which is preventing them from contacting unsafe people.

Children are often admitted to this home in an emergency, in line with the home's statement of purpose. However, the admissions procedure is not always followed for

children with high risk-taking behaviour. A sufficient strategy was not adopted for one child with self-injurious behaviour. This resulted in an opportunity for the child to self-harm.

The risk assessments provide guidance to staff about the children's daily routines and information about incidents that have occurred. However, not all information in the plans is up to date. For example, information from a child's matching risk assessment was not part of the child's safety plan. In a missing-from-home protocol, an action agreed at a strategy meeting was not in the action plan for staff to follow. This does not support staff to keep children safe.

Medication is not always administered and stored in line with children's prescriptions. Staff training in safe handling of medication has taken place; however, not all staff have completed this. This could result in children being harmed if their medication is given incorrectly.

Staff work in partnership with the police to increase the protective factors for the children in relation to their needs. However, for one child, this has resulted in a number of arrests, leading to an increased risk of criminalisation.

There have been no incidents of children going missing. The high level of staff supervision reduces the risk of children going missing from this home. Staff also work in collaboration with the police. Staff escalate their concerns for children with the police when they are worried for the children's safety.

Staff use physical intervention when needed to protect children and staff from harm. When an incident of restraint has occurred, staff have held reflective conversations with children. This is helping them to recognise the impact that negative behaviour can have on others.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Progress from the last visit by the regulator has not been sustained. Decisions to move children into the home are influenced by a lack of local suitable placements for children rather than according to children's needs. This demonstrates that the provider's own referral procedures are not followed.

Decisions made by the senior managers relating to the admission of a child have overlooked the registered manager's delegated authority and have disempowered his ability to lead his team. Staff feel disillusioned. Staff morale is low and there is now instability in the management structure of the home.

The provider does not have in place sufficient systems for the use of agency workers. The checks completed do not provide the regulator with reassurance that managers are aware that the skills and knowledge of the agency workers are aligned to the needs of the children. Checks completed are inconsistent. Safe recruitment practice to protect children is not followed effectively. This could result in unsafe people having access to children.

The manager's quality of care review does not demonstrate consultation with children or other relevant people about how to improve the service. This limits the progress and the experience that children have living at this home.

Managers make effective use of staff coming together at team meetings. Children are at the centre of conversation among the staff. Meetings provide staff with a forum to keep up to date with the children's needs as well as an opportunity to reflect on the demands of their roles. This helps staff to plan strategies as to how to care for the 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 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. provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iv)) In particular, the registered provider must ensure that the staff team is able to help and care for children placed at the home in an effective manner, and that care plans are aligned to the home's statement of purpose.	19 December 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; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;	19 December 2021

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)(v)(vi)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the children's risk assessments have all information known about children included, so that strategies can be put in place for staff to follow.	
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; 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)(f)) The registered provider must demonstrate that decisions in relation to the admission of children are made by the registered manager, and that the home is managed as set out in the home's statement of purpose.	19 December 2021
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and	19 December 2021

have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the 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— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)) In particular, the registered provider must not undermine the authority and responsibilities of the registered manager as bestowed by the Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015. The registered provider must ensure that all decisions in relation to children coming to live in the home are underpinned by risk assessments and plans which demonstrate how the service will meet their needs. The registered manager must ensure that when children are admitted to the home in an emergency, the admission process prevents the risk of children being exposed to a harmful situation, in relation to their assessed needs.	
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children’s home. In particular, the registered person must ensure that— medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23 (1) (2)(b)(c)) In particular, the registered person must have in place a storage and recording system that reduces the risk of errors occurring.	19 December 2021

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; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and 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)(b)(c)(d)) In particular, the registered person must ensure the recruitment process for the use of agency workers does not put at risk the safety and well-being of children.	19 December 2021
The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to— HMCI. (Regulation 44 (7)(a)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that information in the report is accurate.	19 December 2021

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that when the registered manager conducts the quality of care review, children, families and other relevant professionals are consulted as part of the process. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

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: SC486606

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

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

Responsible individual: David Johnston

Registered manager: John Briggs

Inspectors

Aaron Mcloughlin, Social Care Inspector
Alexandra Howitt, Social Care Inspector

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