

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	23/06/2015
Unique reference number	SC486606
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Registered person address	City Hall, Centenary Square, BRADFORD, West Yorkshire, BD1 1HY

Responsible individual	Mr David Byrom
Registered manager	Mrs Joanne Logan-Flynn
Inspector	Ms Hussain

Inspection date	22/06/2015
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people's welfare is not safeguarded and their care and experiences are poor	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

SC486606

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is inadequate because:

- Young people known to the local authority are not always adequately risk assessed prior to admission. This leads to inadequate care arrangements considering their level of need.
- Staff do not follow the missing from home protocol and adequate arrangements are not made to locate missing young people.
- The needs of children and young people admitted through the emergency procedure take priority over those accessing respite provision. This leads to short notice cancellations of existing respite arrangements.
- Looked after children are not supported by relevant looked after documentation that identifies how they should be cared for and how their individual needs should be met.
- The home does not maintain care plans for individual children staying at the home evidencing progression.
- The home does not maintain an admissions register.
- The homes Statement of Purpose requires updating to reflect the arrangements in the care given to children and young people.

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
6: The quality and purpose of care standard: (2)The standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to - *(ii) protect and promote each child’s welfare; *(iv) provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking into account the child’s background; *(ix) make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child’s relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice; (3)The conditions are – (b) the care meets the child’s needs;	07/08/15
7: The children’s views, wishes and feelings standard (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to- (c) keep the children’s guide and homes complaint procedure under review and seek children’s comments before revising either document	07/08/15
13: The leadership and management standard (1)The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that – (b) promotes their welfare (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to – (a) 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; (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; (e) ensure that the homes workforce provides continuity of care to each child; (f) 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; (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home	07/08/15

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))	07/08/15
The registered person must cooperate with the child's placing authority in agreeing and signing the child's placement plan (Regulation 17 (2))	07/08/15
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy setting out the steps taken, and to be taken, to prevent children from being absent without permission; The procedures to be followed, and the roles and responsibilities of persons working at the home, in relation to a child who is, or has been, so absent (Regulation 34 (4) (a) (b)) Before implementing, or making an amendment which the registered person considers to be substantive to, the missing child policy, the registered person must have regard to any relevant local authority or police protocols on missing children (Regulation 34 (5) (b))	07/08/15
The registered person must maintain records for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child (Regulation 36 (1) (a)) with specific reference to all necessary LAC documentation	07/08/15
The registered person must maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4 (Regulation 37 (2) (a)) with specific reference to an admissions register as identified in Schedule 4 (1)	07/08/15

* These requirements are subject to statutory requirement notice.

The children's home strengths

- The manager and staff team are highly experienced, flexible and committed to meeting the needs of children and young people. They work hard to provide them with the best possible service.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The local authority manages the dual service which provides short break respite care and support to children on the 'edge of care' and emergency accommodation within the city.

The home provides care and accommodation for up to four children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. This includes three beds for respite provision and one emergency bed.

Recent inspection history – This is a new registration.

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	inadequate
Children and young people do not always experience consistent care arrangements. This is due to the changing nature of the service afforded to children and young people. This affects staff in providing them with stability and consistency. The staff team are not always able to invest time with young people. Cancellations of respite and outreach sessions often take place at short notice. This negatively affects the ability for some children and young people to develop trusting relationships with staff. Lengths of stay for some children and young people admitted to the emergency bed vary from one to seventeen days. Discussions on placements take place between the Registered Manager and senior managers. There are no formal logs evidencing these discussions on children and young people's case files. This leads to uncertainty in the staff team leaving them unable to advise and reassure children and young people including parents. As a result, young people's preparation for transition is not always effective. The staff team make efforts to identify appropriate education provision for young people returning following out of city placements. This is not always achievable during their stay. However, young people already attending school receive support to maintain their placement and make progress in their learning and development. Some young people's records do not demonstrate progress made in the home. The lack of care planning, assessment and progress for the young people admitted through the emergency route means that little impact can be demonstrated from admission to moving on. However, progress can be seen for the young people accessing the respite provision. The staff team place the wellbeing of all children and young people at the centre of their practice. They work hard to ensure young people receive a good level of support but due to the nature of the consistently changing service, this is not always possible. One young person using the service comments, 'it feels a bit like a nursery here with the paintings on the wall. I don't even have a TV in my room.'	

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
Children and young people do not always live in a safe home environment. This is due to the complex and challenging needs of some young people admitted to the emergency provision. Despite the service being aware of some young people and the risks they pose, they do not always plan well and anticipate issues ahead of admission. Admissions take place without appropriate risk management plans. Risk assessments are not robust and do not take into account information identified by professionals. For example, a youth offending worker identified a young person as presenting high risk to himself and others. This was not reflected in the homes assessment where he was only described as posing 'some' risk. This can lead to inadequate arrangements for the care and supervision of young people while potentially compromising the safety and wellbeing of others. In cases where young people are unknown, information and levels of risk are also unknown, occasionally taking several days to ascertain. This particularly relates to admissions that have taken place during the night and at weekends. The unpredictable nature of the service leaves the manager and staff unsure about potential risk to themselves and other children and young people. One member of staff states, 'we don't know who is coming in as an emergency until they get here. We often don't know very much about them at all.' As a result, risk management is ineffective and safeguarding arrangements are not always timely. Young people present a variety of needs and behaviours including self-harm, substance misuse, child sexual exploitation as well as criminal, destructive and violent behaviours. This potentially exposes other vulnerable children receiving a respite service to these behaviours. In order to minimise these risks, the staff team have little option but to cancel existing respite arrangements. This happens on a regular basis, negatively affecting children and their families. Young people missing from home do not always experience a well-coordinated response from staff and professionals. Some staff are not active at following the missing from home protocol. Steps taken by the staff team are not effective at escalating concerns. This impacts on the ability of staff to ensure their safe return home. Young people refuse to engage with independent interviews following their return. This means adults are not always clear about their whereabouts or the risks to them when missing. Daily logs relating to missing young people do not always provide sufficient detail about the missing episode and actions taken. Missing logs are not always kept up to date and do not reflect the actual incidents of young people being missing from the home. This means information is not always shared effectively leading to	

confusion by staff and others of the actions taken.

Recruitment practices are generally thorough and well managed with checks on new staff undertaken prior to their approval. However, some records looked at during the inspection raised issues requiring further clarity. This information was not available leaving the potential for children and young people exposed to unsafe workers.

Some staff have a good awareness of risks to children and young people through social media, bullying and grooming. They undertake effective work with some young people and parents and successfully achieve progress in these areas.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
The home is managed by a suitably experienced, permanent and qualified Registered Manager. She has been in post since the home was registered in January 2015. Cover arrangements are in place with the assistant manager in her absence. Staffing levels, particularly during the night are not always adequate to meet the complex and challenging needs of some young people. Some staff are uncertain about the role of the 'sleep in' and when they can and should be woken. The majority of the staff team feel devalued and frustrated. This is due to the constant changing nature of service provision. Staff feel pulled in many directions. Despite being very experienced, knowledgeable and committed to meeting the needs of young people they feel the service needs to function and prioritise one aspect of need whether this be emergency provision or respite. One member of staff said, 'It feels like we are a Jack of all trades and a master of none.' Another staff member said, 'Just when you think you understand what we are meant to do, you come on the next shift and something else has changed.' The changing face of the service and competing demands have left staff, social workers and families with little clarity about the service provision available. The home does not maintain an admissions register. Despite the home having an attendance register, adequate details as required by regulations are not maintained. Documentation for looked after children, which is necessary to plan, determine and deliver care in line with their needs is not requested from social workers. It is not	

available at the time of or following admission. The staff team working in the home do not maintain any care plans for young people. This detrimentally leads to delay in arrangements for health, education, care and safeguarding. A placing social worker commented, 'I asked for a higher staffing ratio and education provision on site. I didn't get either.'

Essential multi-agency information sharing meetings are not always taking place in a timely way. Delays of over a week were recorded. This has led to inadequate and untimely information sharing leaving children and young people exposed to unmanaged risks.

The manager and staff team are proactive and committed to developing good relationships with professionals, young people and family members. However, short notice cancellations of pre-existing arrangements for respite and outreach support negatively impact and hinder relationships.

Supervision does not always take place in a timely way. Rescheduling cancelled supervisions following periods of sickness and annual leave do not ordinarily take place. This has led to some staff without formal supervision for a minimum of three months. Furthermore, team meetings are not always prioritised and staff feel training does not sufficiently equip them to meet the complexity and demands of some young people. Although staff turn to the manager and each other for support and advice, this has led to the majority of staff feeling deskilled with their views and other pertinent issues left unaddressed.

Internal monitoring despite taking place regularly is not robust in that it does not recognise the many deficits and shortfalls identified during the inspection.

The ethos and objectives as set in the Statement of Purpose are not a true reflection of how the service operates. The document has not been updated following changes to service provision. Little consideration is given on how some admissions are managed. For example, some young people fitting the criteria for an emergency admission are allocated to respite beds even though they do not fit this criteria.

The children's guide is not up to date. This does not provide children and young people with correct and adequate details on for example, how to contact the Commissioner for Children's Rights.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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*.

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