

SC033502

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 is a local authority run children's home. It provides care and accommodation for up to six young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 June 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious failures that mean children and young people are not protected, and their welfare is not fully promoted or safeguarded. Therefore, the care and experiences of most children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 21 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is inadequate because:

- Not all young people are kept safe. They are very vulnerable and are involved in high-risk behaviours that include criminal activity, taking illegal substances, and

going missing from care.

- The complex and challenging needs of young people using the service are not reflected in the current statement of purpose.
- Staffing arrangements are not adequate in all instances to meet the significant needs of the young people being cared for.
- The majority of young people are not routinely attending education, or they have minimal attendance.
- Most young people do not have routine health check-ups. They do not have access to the specialist psychological services that they need to support their emotional well-being and mental health needs.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The home requires sufficient permanent staff to meet the significant needs of the young people, keep them safe and to build trusting relationships to better ensure young people's engagement.
- Access to specialist health professionals to better support young people who have experienced child trauma and neglect, and assist staff in fully meeting the young people's physical, mental and emotional well-being.
- Review and revise the home's statement of purpose to accurately reflect the young people being cared for.
- Engage young people in education and training.
- Make sure that staff receive training in all areas to enable them meet the needs of the young people in their care.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/10/2016	Full	Good
23/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
22/09/2015	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 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
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. (Regulation 16(3)(a)(b))	28/07/2017
14. The care planning standard (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (a) that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose.	14/08/2017
12. The protection of children standard (1) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (b) 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.	14/08/2017
13. The leaders and management standard (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; (d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child.	14/08/2017

Recommendations

- Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care sets out the steps local authorities and their partners should take to prevent children from going missing and to protect them when they do go missing. Children's homes should have regard to the relevant aspects of this guidance. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.25) In particular, that the home has sufficient staffing arrangements and resources to allow staff to go out and search for young people when safe to do so.
- Sufficient staff means a home having enough suitably trained staff (including someone in a management role) on duty to meet the assessed needs of all children in the home, and that those staff are able to respond to emergency placements where accepted. The registered person must demonstrate every effort to achieve continuity of staffing so that children's attachments are not overly disrupted, including ensuring that the employment of any temporary staff will not prevent children from receiving the continuity of care that they need. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards,' page 51, paragraph 10.1) In particular, ensure that all staff receive training in child sexual exploitation and self-harm.
- Children should be in full-time education while they are of compulsory school age, unless their personal education plan contained within the care plan or other relevant plan states otherwise. The home must aim to support full-time attendance at school unless the child's relevant plan indicates that is not in their best interests. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards,' page 28, paragraph 5.14) In particular, ensure that young people routinely attend education and ensure that staff work with the virtual head teacher and/or other suitable persons to achieve this.
- Children's homes staff should encourage children to take a proactive role in looking after their day-to-day health and well-being. When a child needs additional health or well-being support, staff should work with the child's placing authority to enable proper and immediate access to any specialist medical, psychological or psychiatric support required, and challenge the authority through regulation 5 engaging with the wider system to ensure that children's needs are met, if this does not happen. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards,' page 34, paragraph 7.10) In particular, ensure that all young people receive essential check-ups and psychological support to address their emotional well-being.
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce-related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraph 19 and 20) The plan should:

Detail the necessary management and staffing structure (including any commissioned to provide health and education), the experience and qualifications of staff currently working within the staffing structure, and any further training

required for those staff, to enable the delivery of the home's statement of purpose;

Detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding and health and safety and mandatory qualifications);

Detail the process for managing and improving poor performance;

Detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice (see regulation 33(4)(b)) and keep appropriate records for staff in the home.

('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.17)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people are inadequate. This is because of significant safeguarding issues and the inability of staff to engage young people fully in education and health services in order to meet their diverse and complex needs.

The majority of young people are not accessing health check-ups and specialist health services that would help them to maintain good physical and emotional well-being. Some young people are involved in taking illegal substances and smoke tobacco. Staff work tirelessly to explain the benefits of maintaining good health and of the significant dangers in partaking in these activities. Staff have made referrals to obtain emotional and mental health support for young people who have previously experienced child trauma and neglect that affects their current mental health. However, these services are not being accessed or are not available, such as mental health services. Therefore, the short and long-term health outcomes of young people are very poor.

Young people are not routinely attending education or training placements, even though staff promote the importance of education. The current strategies to ensure young people's engagement in education and training are not working. This reduces their life chances and opportunities as young adults to gain positive employment.

One young person said: 'I have the best key worker ever, she is great. I can talk to her and she helps me.' This demonstrates that some young people have established positive relationships with core staff. However, the home is regularly using a number of casual workers. This is hindering some young people being able to build positive and trusting relationships with staff, resulting in a lack of engagement. This is having a substantial negative impact, limiting the young people's progress and adding further to their day-to-day experiences being inadequate.

Young people's views, opinions and preferences are regularly obtained. They give their views at statutory reviews and take part in residents' meetings. One young person said: 'We are asked about what meals we want and what we want to do in the evening.' This

demonstrates that young people are routinely consulted about their care.

Young people have gained some life skills in preparation for independence. They help with house chores, including using the washing machine, cleaning their own rooms and taking part in the food shopping. Staff promote the learning of independent life skills. As a result, young people are learning valuable self-care skills appropriate to their age in preparation for adulthood.

Most young people benefit from regular contact with their families. Staff make certain that visits to family take place. This ensures that young people maintain relationships with those who are important to them. This reinforces their family connections and a sense of identity.

Young people benefit from living in well-maintained, decorated and furnished home. This provides them with a positive and comfortable environment.

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

Young people are not always kept safe and some are at risk of significant harm. Staff demonstrate clearly that they are aware and understand the risks and vulnerabilities for each young person. Although risk-taking behaviour has reduced for particular individual young people, others remain at substantial risk of harm. The deployed safeguarding strategies are ineffective for some young people. This has involved continuous criminal activity, as well as challenging and dangerous behaviour and pursuits. These include the taking of illegal substances, involvement in gangs, risks to child sexual exploitation, violent behaviour and going missing from care.

Staff have little control over some young people. This has resulted in a very high number of missing from home incidents and unauthorised absences, with one young person being the most missing child in West Yorkshire in recent months. Missing from care protocols are not followed in all instances. This is due to a deficit in the availability of staff resources and/or drivers on shifts to be able to search or collect young people and bring them home. This leaves young people at continued risk.

The committed core staff team works to implement rules and boundaries to enable young people to be consistently cared for. However, because of staff sickness and unfilled vacancies, there is a great reliance on casual staff. These workers do not know the young people well. This has negatively affected the quality of care and the ability to manage anti-social, risk-taking and seriously challenging behaviour. This does not ensure young people's well-being and contributes to them feeling insecure.

Staff arrange and attend multi-disciplinary professionals' meetings regularly to review the safeguarding arrangements for young people, such as team 'around the child' and strategy meetings. A number of actions and decisions have been made to try to protect children, without success.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The registered manager has been in post since 2002 and has a wealth of experience working with children and young people. He holds a social work and management

qualification. The manager demonstrates an understanding of the progress and decline of each young person. Attempts to take action to improve the outcomes and safeguard some young people have, however, been unsuccessful.

The aims and objectives of the home have changed significantly in recent months. Nevertheless, there has not been a revision of the home's statement of purpose to reflect this. In addition, staffing resources have not been increased or maintained to adequate levels at all times. Therefore, the needs of young people requiring a higher level of care have not been fully met. This has affected the vision and clarity of the quality of care to be delivered to young people to attain the best outcomes for all of them.

Staffing levels have reduced since the last inspection. Due to a lack of effective and prompt action by managers, this has, on some occasions, meant that 50% of those on duty have been casual workers. These workers are not always able to engage positively with young people owing to them not having established and trusted relationships with them. This adversely affects the quality of care.

There is a committed and child-focused core staff team. Staff say that they are a self-supporting team. Most staff receive formal regular supervision, team meetings and daily handovers that promote positive communication. Where shortfalls have been noted with formal supervision, these have been addressed in recent months. All permanent staff hold the diploma level 3 in caring for children and young people. In addition, they undertake mandatory training, which includes behaviour management, first aid, child protection, and health and safety along with other essential training.

There is excellent partnership working with professionals. Professionals report that communication is 'very good' or 'excellent'. Staff inform professionals of the progress of the young people, as well as when safeguarding or other serious matters arise. This keeps key stakeholders up-to-date about young people's care and circumstances.

Action has been taken to implement one of the two requirement and one recommendation made at the last inspection. The manager has sent notifications of serious incidents to Ofsted as required. Key-work sessions have been undertaken in identified areas with young people in line with their placement plan.

The home has failed to implement one requirement and three recommendations fully. Not all staff vacancies have been recruited to. Staff have not received additional training in child sexual exploitation and self-harm. This means that not all staff have the necessary skills to meet the needs of all young people who come to live at the home. Missing from care protocols are not followed in all instances. Staff are not able to search for young people on all occasions due to insufficient staff resources, which means the safeguarding measures are not always fully effective.

Monitoring systems evaluate the quality of the service. These include the monthly independent regulation 44 visits and audits undertaken by the manager. These regularly identify shortfalls and omissions to make improvements. Nevertheless, action has not been taken by the local authority and the manager to ensure that all the identified deficits have been addressed. Therefore, the lack of progress for particular young people has persisted and a decline in their progress and safety continues.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. 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.

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: SC033502

Provision sub-type: Children's home

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

Responsible individual: David Byrom

Registered manager: Christopher Workman

Inspector

Debbie Foster, social care inspector

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