

1273497

Registered provider: Birmingham Children's Trust Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is a short-break service for seven children who have learning disabilities. The home has been operated for over 20 years by a local authority. The service and the existing manager registered again under a newly created local authority trust in March 2018.

It is one of four homes operated by this local authority children's trust.

Inspection dates: 9 to 10 August 2018

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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

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
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received, and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(f)(g)(ii)(h))</p>	31/10/2018
<p>The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>the name of the child;</p> <p>details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to</p>	31/10/2018

<p>use the measure;</p> <p>the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</p> <p>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;</p> <p>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")—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>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)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(iv))</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a))</p>	<p>31/10/2018</p>

Recommendations

- Ensure good employment practice. The responsible person must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguard children and minimise potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
In particular, ensure best practice in safer recruitment processes.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

New children get a warm welcome and an introduction to overnight stays at their own pace. Careful matching means that staffing levels reflect the needs of the group of children accessing the service at any given time. Vulnerable children get extra help, enjoy specific activities and develop new friendships. They have the opportunity to play,

develop their language and communication skills and try out new experiences.

Staff understand children's disabilities and are kind. Staff promote independence as children move towards adulthood. One parent described how staff had allayed her anxiety when her child first started using the service. The parent said: 'Staff told me, "It will work as long as we work with you. It will become another part of his world." They were right.'

Support from the children's rights and advocacy service means that consultation and children's choice are well represented in children's records.

Partnership working between the home, school and parents means that staff gather up-to-date information and base their care on a plan agreed with families. Parents retain control of coordination of additional support for their children's needs.

Staff support children's emotional, health and educational plans well. One consultant psychiatrist said: 'I have always found the leadership and staff to be highly professional, accessible and collaborative in their working with me and my team of nurses and psychologists.'

The manager ensures that the environment is homely, welcoming and adapted to meet the needs of children who have disabilities. The decor and furnishings are now of a good quality. Communication aids, located around children's redecorated bedroom and living areas, help them to feel comfortable in their surroundings. Further renovations are under way to provide an independence suite and a separate sensory garden area, a refurbished kitchen and staff offices.

Parents are appreciative and positive about the service. One parent said: 'Staff give family-centred care. They have shown me this as a parent. They care so much.'

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

Arrangements to protect children are good. Staff are skilled in assessing individual and group risks and take effective action to keep everyone safe. They are trained and knowledgeable about the risks faced by disabled children.

Staff understand that frustration or underlying conditions of a child's disability are at the root of behavioural challenges and so apply techniques to distract or diffuse tension.

Staff work closely with children's mental health services and parents to help secure the right support for children whose behaviour can result in self-harm. One neuro-psychiatrist described a positive view of 'detailed discussions' with staff that assisted their clinical assessment and ongoing treatment plans. Staff are trained to use restraint and do this rarely and usually only to prevent children from self-harming.

Carefully tailored staffing levels mean that there are always enough staff on duty to give children the individual attention they need. Waking night staff ensure that children are

safe while they sleep. A range of safety and security measures keep children safe while building work continues to improve the fabric and facilities on offer to children.

Careful selection and vetting of staff is not always subject to additional levels of scrutiny. This means that staff files can lack the evidence that recruitment checks have included verification with referees or that all staff have provided a full employment history.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

This service delivers its aims and objectives. Consistent management and staffing contribute to the improvement in the service, which has, for some years, required improvement. It now provides a reliable, good-quality short break service.

Children have fun and learn new life skills while they stay over, and families receive good support and a break to help them recharge. One parent said that they find the stability of the staff team very reassuring. 'I love the consistency of staff and the connection you get and the warmth. The love the staff have for kids transfers over to the parents.'

Some aspects of managerial monitoring and review need to improve. Sometimes, the supplementary in-house care planning and risk management documents do not make clear the current agreed plan for staffing levels or the administration of prescribed medication. Staff have not always completed children's monthly summaries and goal-setting documents. Managerial monitoring has not picked up these omissions or resolved contradictions between documents. This detracts from the otherwise improving picture of care planning and review. It means that the service has missed an opportunity to demonstrate some children's progress and ways in which some children's views have made a difference.

Similarly, the managerial review of the rare occasions of physical restraint does not always evidence that the manager has challenged staff practice. For example, some records do not make clear whether staff used approved restraint techniques or the location or duration of any hold, or whether staff acted wisely in their choice of hold. This means that the manager cannot be sure that each restraint has been necessary or proportionate.

The registered manager and responsible individual are quick to challenge other professionals when there are shortfalls in the level of support needed to promote children's well-being. Consultation and communication with children about their views are increasingly effective because staff are implementing their communication training. However, consultation with parents and professional partners, including the placing authority, has not been embedded in any review of the quality of care.

The experienced and qualified staff team is knowledgeable about the children. Staff are now well trained and reported receiving good support from their managers. However, some new staff have not always had supervision at the frequency described in the new workforce development plan. This means they may not get the support they need in the early stages of their work with disabled children.

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 differences 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 and 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 whom 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: 1273497

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Birmingham Children's Trust Limited

Registered provider address: Third Floor Zone 16, 1 Lancaster Circus, Birmingham B4 7DJ

Responsible individual: Melanie Page

Registered manager: Julie Clark

Inspector

Christy Wannop, social care inspector

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