

SC039900

Registered provider: Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a local authority. It is registered for up to seven young people who have learning and physical disabilities. The manager is suitably qualified and experienced and has been registered with Ofsted since April 2009.

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 November 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account requires improvement to be good

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers inadequate

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: 2 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/10/2018	Full	Good
18/12/2017	Full	Good
28/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
11/10/2016	Full	Outstanding

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 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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— treat each child with dignity and respect. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(iii))</p>	31/01/2020
<p>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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(v))</p>	31/01/2020
<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— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— 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; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p>	31/01/2020

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(f)(h))	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a))	31/01/2020
Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. Nothing in paragraph (5) or regulation 46 (review of premises) requires or authorises the registered person to contravene or not comply with— any other provision of these Regulations; or any conditions in relation to the registration of the registered person under Part 2 of the Care Standards Act 2000. (Regulation 16 (5)(6)(a)(b))	31/01/2020
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 has the appropriate experience, qualifications and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) (“the Level 3 Diploma”); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. (Regulation 32 (2)(a)(b)(3)(d)(4)(a)(b))	31/01/2020
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— the date, time and location of the use of the measure; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; 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;	31/01/2020

<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)(iii)(v)(b)(i)(c))</p>	
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)) Specifically, ensure that the designated officer is informed when any allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff at the home.</p>	31/01/2020
<p>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”). (Regulation 45 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(3))</p>	31/01/2020

Recommendations

- For children’s homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children’s homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than ‘institutional’ impression.

Just as in a family home, children should be able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child’s needs. Limits on privacy and access may only be put in place to safeguard each child in the home (regulation 21(c)(i)). Any decisions to limit a child’s access to any area of the home and any modifications to the environment of the home, must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child’s welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child’s needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. Information on restraint and deprivation of liberty is contained in the protection of children section of the Guide from paragraph 9.41. (‘Guide to the children’s homes

regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9 and 3.10)

- When establishing the home, the registered person must ensure that it is suitably located so that children are effectively safeguarded and can access services to meet needs identified in their relevant plans (see regulations 12(2)(c)). Under regulation 46, the registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

Inspection judgements

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

Leaders and managers did not fully consider the likely impact that a new young person would have on young people already resident. They failed to recognise, assess and effectively manage the risks that this young person was known to present. In addition, leaders and managers ignored advice that this young person should ideally be placed in a solo placement. The young person's recent arrival has unsettled other young people and his challenging behaviour is upsetting for them.

Since the last inspection there have been some improvements in home conditions, as some rooms have been beautifully redecorated. However, some areas of the home continue to require improvement. The sensory room and one upstairs bathroom have leak marks on the ceiling, and the shower cubicle has some mould in it. A hole in a wall on the landing upstairs has been there for several weeks. One downstairs toilet has a big sign on the door, in words and pictures, that it is for staff use only. There is no risk assessment in place that justifies why young people cannot access this toilet within their own home. These shortfalls do not make the home warm and welcoming throughout and they give it an institutionalised feel.

Surveillance equipment such as audio baby monitors used by staff in young people's bedrooms during the night are not risk assessed and reviewed to ensure that these are solely used as a safeguarding measure. Staff and the manager have not attained written consent from the local authority to authorise the use of these monitors. This does not promote young people's right to privacy.

Staff and the manager display young people's confidential information in communal areas of the home. This information includes bath and bedtime routines and school timetables, which identify the name of the school that young people attend. As a result, visitors have access to some sensitive and personal information. This does not protect young people's dignity and their right to confidentiality.

A stable, experienced team of staff have formed positive relationships with young

people. Subsequently most young people are making progress in different aspects of their development, in relation to their starting points.

Staff promote some of the young people's health needs well. For example, one young person has lost weight and her epilepsy seizures have reduced. However, all staff have not received up-to-date epilepsy training, despite the epilepsy nurse recommending it as part of the young person's healthcare plan. The inspector identified that some staff with out-of-date medication training were administering controlled drugs to young people. This has not had a direct impact on young people to date but has the potential to compromise young people's health and well-being if not rectified.

All young people attend education regularly. Young people's school reports show that they are doing well and meeting most of their set targets. Making good progress with their learning improves young people's outlook, aspirations and life chances.

Most young people living at the home have complex needs and staff and the manager have put in place structured routines for them. Young people are fully aware of their daily activities. This is reassuring for them and lessens any anxieties that they might otherwise have.

Young people access various activities in the community and in the home. For example, young people go out for meals, enjoy going on holidays, attend music concerts, cooking and going for long relaxing walks. Young people have the opportunity to socialise and make long-lasting friendships, and are developing good independence skills.

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

When a young person made an allegation at school of physical abuse, against staff at the home, the manager took some immediate action to safeguard him. For example, the manager liaised with the young person's social worker, who visited the young person and sought assurances about what had happened. However, neither managers nor staff ensured that this allegation was referred to the designated officer in a timely way. This meant that the investigation did not take account of relevant information that may have been held by the designated officer. This shortfall highlights a gap in the knowledge of managers and staff about safeguarding procedures and how to implement these to fully safeguard young people. Steps are now being taken by the provider to review the information and ensure that nothing has been missed.

Staff and the manager use physical restraint as a last resort to keep young people and others safe from harm. However, restraint records do not comply with regulation. For example, key details are not recorded, staff do not always receive a debrief following incidents of restraint and although young people receive a debrief, this is conducted by staff who have been involved in the restraint. This is a missed opportunity for managers to effectively review restraint incidents to identify learning, potential patterns and trends and ensure that staff practice is appropriate.

The manager has not updated the locality risk assessment after learning of pertinent information about risks linked to county lines and child sexual exploitation in the area close to the children's home. This does not enable staff to fully understand the risks in the local area and develop strategies to continue to keep young people safe when they access the community.

The home has not received any complaints since the last Ofsted full inspection. There have not been any episodes of young people going missing from the home.

Staff are proactive in doing preventative work with young people to keep them safe. They have completed some work together about online safety, bullying and 'stranger danger' awareness. As a result, young people learn how to keep themselves safe when out in the community and at home.

Young people told the inspector that they feel safe living at the home. They stated that they have allocated key carers who they have built good, positive relationships with. As a result, they are able to speak with their key carers when they have any worries.

Staff manage young people's behaviour well. Young people have clear boundaries in place, which they follow to help keep them safe. When there are concerns relating to young people's behaviour, staff explain how they can make better choices. This helps young people to learn from their behaviours and develop ways of regulating their emotions.

Staff support young people to develop good independence skills, in line with their age and needs. Young people are allowed to take age-appropriate risks. For example, one young person, with staff support, is now able to safely travel independently to school.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Shortfalls identified at this inspection show that management monitoring and oversight are poor, as is decision making on occasion. This undermines the quality of young people's experiences and limits the progress they could make to enable them to meet their full potential.

The manager does not consistently follow all safer recruitment processes to ensure that staff are suitable to work with young people. For example, he does not explore gaps in staff's employment histories and ensure that appropriate references have been sought and verified.

The manager could not evidence during the inspection the equivalence of one staff member's level 3 qualification against the level 3 training required for staff who work in children's homes. The manager told the inspector that he did not know that the member of staff only has a qualification relating to adults. This shows a lack of effective monitoring of staff's experience and skills.

The manager does not ensure that all staff training is kept up to date and that staff are

upskilled to meet each young person's needs. Staff do not have up-to-date training in county lines, child sexual exploitation, learning and physical disabilities, attention hyperactivity disorder, autism and epilepsy. In addition, some staff have not received safeguarding training, behaviour management, bereavement and attachment and trauma training. These shortfalls do not ensure that all staff know and understand key issues so that they can always provide personalised care and appropriate guidance to young people.

Staff and the manager receive monthly specialist training to support them to meet young people's emotional needs. However, the manager does not keep a clear audit trail to evidence how staff are using this training to support young people, and the potential impact it has on young people's progress.

The manager's quality of care review report lacks consultation with young people and partner agencies. As a result, feedback is not sought and used to improve the quality of care provided to young people. The report does not provide an analytical evaluation of the strengths and needs of the service. This does not show that the manager has a good understanding of the strengths and needs of the service to be able to drive forward improvement.

Staff and partner agencies are complimentary of the manager and reported good partnership working. Staff receive regular supervision and told the inspector that they feel supported and valued.

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: SC039900

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Council House, Priory Road, Dudley DY1 1HF

Responsible individual: Jake Shaw

Registered manager: Mark Bates

Inspector

Rumbi Mangoma, social care inspector

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