

# 1232380

**Birtenshaw**

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## **Information about this children's home**

This home is part of a charitable organisation. The home is registered to provide short breaks for up to six children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or physical disabilities and/or learning disabilities.

There is currently no registered manager in post.

**Inspection date:** 4 March 2021

## **This monitoring visit**

This on-site visit was carried out in response to concerns about staffing levels, staff competency and staff supervision. In addition, matters arising from the Ofsted survey, safeguarding notifications and monthly monitoring reports have been considered. The home has not been inspected since September 2019.

The manager, who was appointed in November 2020, has recently left the organisation. Suitable arrangements are in place for the management of the home until a permanent manager is identified.

Three recommendations were made at the last inspection. Suitable action has been taken to ensure that staff understand and implement agreed risk management strategies. Some progress has been made in improving restraint records, which now include the manager's evaluation. However, these records continue to be kept in a bound book with no copy of the record being placed on the child's file. A recommendation relating to the use of restorative justice was not considered during this visit.

The number of children who access this service has been significantly reduced since the start of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. As a result, several staff have been redeployed to elsewhere in the organisation, leaving a core team of staff to support up to three children at a time. The team is supplemented by a small number

of flexible support workers and staff from the organisation's school. These staff work regularly with the children to provide continuity of care. When asked about staffing, a social worker said:

It is usually the same staff caring for [name of child]. [Name of child] needs familiarity, and without it his behaviour deteriorates. The fact that he has only had one restraint since being at this service tells me that they understand him and know how he ticks. [Name of child] was having two restraints a day at his previous placement and was on the verge of going into full-time care. He is like a different person now.

The arrangements for supervising staff require improvement. Consistency has been undermined by the movement of staff, which has resulted in several staff going for long periods of time without formal supervision. Given the pressures of the role, which are currently being amplified as a result of the pandemic, this is an area that needs to be addressed quickly.

Staff understand children's needs, risks and vulnerabilities, including behaviours that are complex and challenging. Acquiring quality training has been a challenge during the pandemic. This has resulted in a delay in staff completing some needs-led training. However, as circumstances change, so do the training opportunities for staff. For example, several staff have recently completed training to provide a safer environment for children who exhibit symptoms of pica, which is being rolled out across the organisation.

There has been one allegation made since Ofsted last visited the home. Suitable action was taken, including referral to the designated officer. However, in-house records were incomplete and did not provide evidence of the decisions made by external safeguarding professionals or the outcome of the incident. This information was acquired later during the visit from elsewhere in the organisation.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/09/2019	Full	Good
14/08/2018	Full	Good
24/08/2017	Full	Good
07/03/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

## 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, the 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 registered person must ensure that all employees—  receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	8 April 2021
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which—  provides for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response. (Regulation 34 (1)(d))  Specifically, ensure that the home's records are organised and include a full account of what action was taken and the outcome of any allegation.	8 April 2021

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that records of restraint are kept on the child's file. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- The registered person should ensure that the behaviour management strategy is understood by staff, who should promote a restorative approach to unacceptable behaviour for those children who have the capacity to learn. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.34)

### Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

## **Children's home details**

**Unique reference number:** 1232380

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Birtenshaw

**Registered provider address:** Darwen Road, Bromley Cross, Bolton BL7 9AB

**Responsible individual:** David Reid

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## **Inspector**

Paul Scott, Social Care Inspector

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