

1271666

Registered provider: City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides care and accommodation for up to four children with a range of social, emotional and behavioural needs. The manager has been registered since April 2020.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 1 to 2 September 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: 17 September 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/09/2019	Full	Good
13/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
15/08/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have trusting and secure relationships with the adults who care for them. They experience care from a committed and nurturing staff team. The quality of these relationships supports children to make good progress.

Staff understand the multiple and sometimes complex needs of the children. They are effective in monitoring the impact of early life trauma and the children's ongoing emotional challenges. Staff seek therapeutic advice when necessary. As a result, children receive care that is responsive to their needs.

Children make progress in most areas of their development. They are healthy and attend routine and urgent medical appointments.

Education is highly prioritised by the staff. Children are helped to have good attendance levels and make progress at school. The empathetic care that children experience has helped to create a positive culture in relation to learning. One child has developed academically during the COVID-19 restrictions because of the help she has received.

Children are able to express their thoughts and feelings. Staff are actively curious and explore what is happening for each child day to day. This helps to ensure that children always have someone to talk to. Children say they know how to complain. They identify the manager as the person to go to if they are not happy about something.

The home is tastefully decorated and provides children with a comfortable living space. Children's bedrooms are personalised and there is ample room for them to live and relax in. The large rear garden provides extra space for the children to play games and have fun in with the staff. The home also has a car to support the children's everyday needs. However, the car is labelled with the provider's name. This stigmatises the children as they are transported around by the staff. This is detrimental to the children's experience while they are living at this home.

The quality of Wi-fi access provided for the children is insufficient. Children do not share positive experiences with their friends, such as playing on game consoles online, because of the poor-quality internet that is in place. This results in children not having the same opportunities as their peers.

Staff help children to take part in various activities. These include swimming and going to the cinema, as well as short breaks to the seaside. One child regularly attends the army cadets. This has helped him to build his self-confidence and also explore his future career options.

When a child moved into the home at short notice, staff were quick to forge an understanding of the child's needs. This has helped the child to build some good relationships with staff after a very unsettling experience of being moved from the last home.

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

Children say they feel safe living at the home. Previously, there were incidents of violence, aggression and other unsafe behaviours, which have now reduced. The commitment of staff has helped children to feel reassured that the staff will be there for them. One child told the inspector, 'It doesn't matter how angry you get, they still care about you.'

Incidents of self-injurious behaviours fluctuate from month to month. Staff use therapeutic techniques to recognise and respond to the signs of emotional distress in children. The endeavours of staff to help children have resulted in these incidents reducing.

The staff's responses to missing-from-home episodes are well coordinated. They work in collaboration with the police when children are at an increased risk of harm. Good communication with other agencies is in place to help manage the risks associated with child exploitation. Children are better protected because of the partnerships staff have with other professionals.

The use of physical intervention has previously been high. The children's emotional distress has resulted in the frequent use of restraint. On most occasions, the use of restraint has been proportional to protect the safety of children and staff. The provider changed its behaviour management policy to remove the use of ground holds, which had previously been applied on a few occasions. This has reduced the risk of staff holding children in a way that could cause increased emotional harm.

In spite of the change to the behaviour management policy, one child's behaviour support plan had not been updated. It still recommended a ground hold restraint as an effective hold to use. This does not provide staff with the strategies needed to protect children, and could result in a child being harmed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The manager is establishing herself in the role. She is actively involved in the running of the home and knows the progress that the children make. The manager has high aspirations for the children and is focused on promoting the best outcomes for each child.

Staff have experienced good leadership from the manager, who has an excellent understanding of the children's needs. She has guided the staff when their role has become increasingly demanding. This has enabled staff to help children to cope better with some difficult emotions.

Staff have regular supervision in place, and training is available. The manager and staff have a working relationship with the provider's child psychologist. This is fundamental in helping staff to develop the knowledge and skills needed to care for children.

The manager and staff are respected by other professionals, who recognise the progress that children have made while living at this home. One social worker told the inspector, 'They work a lot on helping children to manage their emotions and learning to regulate.'

The manager does not have a monitoring system to assess the quality of the care delivered. Recorded information is disorganised. The manager does not monitor the use of physical intervention or evaluate whether the use of restraint is in line with the child's behaviour support plan. The staff debriefs that take place after the use of a restraint are poor in quality and only offer minimal reflection on the event. Ineffective monitoring and disorganised recording systems limit the manager's ability to assess whether the care for children is in their best interest. This could result in children not having their needs met and being at risk of harm.

The manager's matching risk assessment considers the needs of children who are referred to the home. However, the manager does not evaluate what impact each child's known behaviours could have on the other children, such as introducing the risk of child sexual exploitation. This does not enable the manager to put in place the strategies needed to protect the children from harm.

The external monitoring system provides some scrutiny of the quality of care provided for the children. However, reports to the regulator are often submitted late. The independent visitor rarely consults with relevant others outside of the home, such as parents and social workers. This reduces the regulator's ability to evaluate whether children are being well cared for and safeguarded effectively.

The recruitment of new staff to the home is good. There is a thorough process in place which features safer recruitment practice as well as having a children's interview panel. This helps to increase the probability of securing good-quality staff members. Children also have a say in who will be recruited to care for them.

The same attention to detail is not in place for the use of agency workers. Information provided about workers is inconsistent. Their relevant training and experience in relation to the children's needs are often unclear. The type of driving licence held by the workers is not always verified. Work references provided by the agency are not validated by managers. The regulator is not reassured that the recruitment of agency workers protects children from harm.

A new staff member at the home has not taken part in a fire drill. Also, the last child who was admitted to the home did not take part in a drill until a couple of weeks after they moved in. This does not support staff or children to be safe in the home in the event of a fire.

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
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</p> <p>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)(iii)(v))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that when assessing the suitability of a child who has been referred to the home, the matching risk assessment must evaluate the known risks for all children to help inform the manager's evaluation prior to admitting a child.</p>	3 October 2021
<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>	3 October 2021

<p>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;</p> <p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</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>research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and</p> <p>feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received.</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that they monitor the quality of care provided for children and staff practice in relation to behaviour management. Also, the registered person must ensure that recording systems provide the right information to enable effective internal and external monitoring of the quality of care provided for children.</p>	
<p>After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must—</p> <p>make arrangements for persons working at the home to receive suitable training in fire prevention; and</p> <p>ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(c)(d))</p>	<p>3 October 2021</p>
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p>	<p>3 October 2021</p>

<p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children’s home; or</p> <p>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,</p> <p>if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual is of integrity and good character;</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;</p> <p>the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure the recruitment process for the use of agency workers does not put at risk the safety and well-being of children.</p>	
<p>The registered person must maintain records (“case records”) for each child which—</p> <p>include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;</p> <p>are kept up to date; and</p> <p>are signed and dated by the author of each entry.</p> <p>are kept in a secure place after the child has ceased to be accommodated in the home. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that children’s plans have up-to-date information recorded in them so staff have the direction and strategies needed to protect children from harm.</p>	<p>3 October 2021</p>

<p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month.</p> <p>When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—</p> <p>if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires;</p> <p>The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether—</p> <p>children are effectively safeguarded; and</p> <p>the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (1) (2)(a) (4)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that the independent visitor consults with stakeholders during each visit. Also, the registered provider must ensure that reports are submitted in a timely manner, no later than one month from the visit occurring.</p>	<p>3 October 2021</p>
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are not stigmatised as a result of living at the home. The home's vehicle should not have the provider's name written on it, identifying children as staff transport them about in support of their daily care needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that the home provides Wi-Fi and internet access for children that enhances their experience while living at their home. The registered person should ensure that children should not have less digital opportunity as a result of being looked after. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.21)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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: 1271666

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

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

Responsible individual: William Kidd

Registered manager: Johanne Cottle

Inspector

Aaron Mcloughlin, Social Care Inspector

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