

SC033502

Registered provider: City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home is registered to accommodate up to four children with social and/or emotional difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since September 2021.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection date: 14 December 2021

Date of last inspection: 20 April 2021

Judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judged that it has declined in effectiveness.

Children's experiences of living at the home vary. Two children have moved on successfully into semi-independent accommodation. However some children have experienced unplanned moves from the home as a result of being exposed to harm and a rapid decline in their placement outcomes.

The quality of the manager's impact risk assessments is poor. The assessments are not thorough in reviewing how children's behaviours could be harmful to others.

The manager has failed to sufficiently evaluate placement outcomes. Learning from past placements has not been achieved to inform the matching assessments for new admissions. The needs-matching process has failed to protect children who were deemed to be at low risk of exploitation prior to moving into the home. Since living at the home, these children's vulnerabilities have increased significantly, and they have been exposed to serious harm.

The manager works confidently with professionals. This ensures that the regular review of children's emerging needs takes place. When support plans are not effective, the manager advocates to reduce the potential risk for the children living together. Consequently, action is taken in children's best interests. However, this has meant an unplanned ending to one child's placement and a move into unregulated accommodation.

Risks for two children relating to an increase in episodes of going missing from home over the summer have reduced. The staff team has disrupted the children's behaviour and re-engaged them in more positive routines in the home. Regular key-work sessions take place and staff build positive relationships with children. As a result, staff have been able to respond effectively when children have made disclosures.

Children have made allegations against staff. Records evidencing the management of these allegations are not organised, meaning it is unclear whether processes are followed through. Children do not always receive reassurance from the manager that action has been taken. Partnership discussions are not fully documented, and the validity of internal investigation documents lacks strength. Although the manager identifies the need for risk assessments to ensure that all staff subject to allegations are working within safe parameters, these assessments have not been completed, which fails to protect both children and staff.

Agency workers are regularly used to fill the gaps in staffing in the home. Consistency in care is achieved through using a small number of agency workers to complete regular shifts. However, the manager fails to implement a vigorous process for vetting agency workers. The use of proformas is ineffective in ensuring that necessary information, including references and Disclosure and Barring Service certificates, is available. The agency workers' suitability is therefore not fully understood, and the manager cannot be confident that those working in the home are safe to work with children. This exposes children to potential harm.

The home is spacious and, at the time of the inspection, was festively decorated for Christmas. A well-equipped gym has been developed for children to use. The home is set in extensive grounds. Managers recognise the potential of the outdoor space and aspire to use it to maximise the quality of the care that children receive. The agreement and implementation of improvement plans have been delayed due to changes in senior management. As a result, the perimeter fencing and outdoor games area remain the same as when previously inspected. Children are not able to use the outdoor areas to their full potential and the aesthetic appearance of the home is poor. The recommendation for improvement remains.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/04/2021	Full	Good
12/03/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
21/05/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
07/03/2019	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, 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—</p> <p>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>help each child to understand how to keep safe;</p> <p>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other.</p> <p>(Regulation 12(1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv))</p>	23 January 2022
<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</p> <p>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>	23 January 2022

<p>feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)(g)(ii))</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that lessons are learned from the children's experience of living at the home.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that record management is organised when safeguarding procedures have been used with regards to staff practice. The registered person must also ensure that children receive feedback about the complaints they have made.</p>	
<p>* The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a))</p> <p>The registered provider must not undermine the authority and responsibilities of the registered manager as bestowed by the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.</p> <p>The registered person must review the known risks for the children currently living in the home to inform the manager's evaluation, when assessing the suitability of children referred to the home.</p> <p>The registered person must review the admission process and ensure that all decisions in relation to children coming to live in the home are underpinned by impact risk and matching assessments.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that children admitted to the home are supported effectively by the staff team.</p>	<p>23 January 2022</p>

<p>* The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>(a) 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.</p> <p>Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d))</p> <p>The registered provider must review all agency staff recruitment files, to ensure that they have followed safer recruitment practice as outlined in the regulation. A record of the findings must be made and any identified actions undertaken.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that they have in place recruitment systems for agency staff members which are underpinned by safer recruitment practice.</p>	<p>23 January 2022</p>
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* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that, as some children in residential care may be worried about being stigmatised or bullied by their peers for being "different" because of where they live, the external front fencing and games area are designed to take account of this. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.13)

Information about this inspection

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full 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: SC033502

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: David Johnston

Registered manager: Lisa Hargreaves

Inspectors

Aaron Mcloughlin, Social Care Inspector
Alex Howitt, Social Care Inspector

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