

# 1232380

Registered provider: Birtenshaw

Full inspection

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 with social and emotional difficulties, physical disabilities or learning disabilities.

The manager registered in August 2022.

### Inspection dates: 10 and 11 August 2022

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>good</b>
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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:** 2 March 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/03/2022	Full	Good
23/09/2019	Full	Good
14/08/2018	Full	Good
24/08/2017	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

The home provides short-break and shared-care services for children with complex needs. These are delivered by a manager and staff who are child focused and strive to provide children with an individualised experience that is purposeful and enjoyable.

Children have developed familiar and trusting relationships with staff. Staff welcome children into the home with an enthusiastic smile while implementing positive routines that help children to settle and get the most out of their stay. A parent said, 'Going to short breaks is a positive experience for [name of child]. He packs his own bag and looks forward to his visit.'

Alternative methods of communication, such as the Picture Exchange Communication System and sign along, are used to enable children to express their feelings and make choices during their stay. This information is analysed following each visit and is used to plan for the child's next stay. This means that visits are personalised and focused on providing opportunities for progress.

Children have access to a good range of purposeful and enjoyable activities. Staff take an enabling approach that is designed to help children to become more confident and independent while having fun. Relationship building and social inclusion are at the forefront of the manager's thinking. Feedback from parents and professionals spoke about children returning home to their families fulfilled, having had lots of experiences, including some that they may not be able to do at home. One parent said, 'The biggest change since [name of child] has been going to short breaks is how settled he is when he comes home.'

Children's complex health needs are understood well by staff. These are captured in each child's care plan and are provided for by staff during each child's stay. Emergency protocols are clearly identified, with relevant information being captured in the child's health passport. This is a useful information-sharing tool should any child need to attend hospital for emergency treatment.

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

Safeguarding is underpinned by a range of policies, procedures and risk assessments that are designed to keep children safe. Individual risks and vulnerabilities, including those associated with disability, are captured in easy-to-follow risk management plans.

All children require high levels of supervision and support to keep them safe. A member of staff is allocated to each child to ensure that safe levels of support are maintained. Overall, this is an effective way of ensuring that known and emerging behaviours and risks can be responded to quickly and safely. However, inspectors

found an isolated incident where a child had sustained a minor injury due to a brief lapse in supervision. Although the manager took steps to address this issue, there was a missed opportunity for reflection and learning for the individual staff member.

Staff understand that taking risks is part of a child's social development, and they make every effort to balance this against the need to keep children safe. When able, children are encouraged to better understand and reduce their risk-taking behaviours. For example, staff have supported one child to better understand road safety and the consequences of running away from staff. The child's social worker said, '[Name of child] gets focused time with people who are not scared of managing him out in the community.'

Staff take a patient and caring approach to behaviour management. Positive relationships and distraction techniques are used effectively to help children manage their anxieties and frustrations. Consequently, the need for physical restraint is rare. However, when it has been used, it has been done in a caring and supportive way.

An electronic system is used to record all incidents of restraint. However, several of these records were found to be missing key information, such as debriefs for children and staff. Some records had not been completed within the required regulatory timescale. Also, the manager does not always take responsibility for completing staff debriefs. This is a missed opportunity for reflection and learning and provides little more than a discussion between the staff involved in the incident.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The home is run by a suitably qualified and experienced registered manager. He is child centred, leads by example and is a positive role model for staff. The manager is ambitious and has made several improvements as part of an ongoing improvement plan. This includes the requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection, all of which have been suitably addressed.

The home continues to offer the service to a smaller number of children. This is a deliberate decision that has been taken in response to the challenges in recruiting staff, which are organisational and sector wide. Increasing service provision is reliant on permanent staff being recruited, and the manager has a staged plan in place to reflect this.

Children benefit from the care and support of a core team of staff who are enthusiastic about the work they do. The use of agency staff, and staff from other parts of the organisation, continues to be frequent. Children are familiar with most of these staff. The impact on continuity of care is limited based on the short-break care offered by the home and reduced occupancy levels.

Staff show a high regard for the manager. They speak about feeling supported and how they now benefit from regular supervision that provides an opportunity for reflection and professional development. Training opportunities for staff are

improving and it is particularly positive that needs-led training, such as working with children who self-harm and children with pica, has been completed.

Monitoring is much stronger than previously reported. The manager has introduced a range of checks and balances that enable him to maintain good oversight of the home and children's progress. This is work in progress and the manager recognises that there is more to do, such as using incident debriefs as an opportunity for a lessons-learned approach.

## 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—</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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that staff consistently maintain the levels of supervision that are required to keep children safe, as identified in the child's risk management plan.</p>	15 September 2022
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</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>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)(b)(i)(c))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that staff involved in physical interventions are not undertaking investigations into that measure.</p>	15 September 2022

## **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:** 1232380

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

**Registered provider:** Birtenshaw

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

**Responsible individual:** Julie Barnes

**Registered manager:** Gary Birchall

## Inspectors

Rob Neild, Social Care Inspector

Paul Scott, Social Care Inspector



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