

SC457780

Registered provider: London Borough of Brent

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides short breaks and permanent care for disabled children with autism spectrum disorders, physical and profound disabilities, learning disabilities and complex health needs. The home provides care for up to eight children at any one time.

The home registered with Ofsted in December 2012.

There has been no registered manager since August 2024. The current manager is in the process of applying to register with Ofsted has submitted a full application.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 November 2024

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

Date of last inspection: 19 March 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/03/2024	Full	Good
22/03/2023	Full	Good
02/11/2021	Full	Outstanding
29/05/2019	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There are currently 47 children accessing the service on a rotational basis and two children live in the home. The children have a wide range of physical and learning needs. Staff have a good understanding of the children's individual needs and respond promptly if a child is unwell, contacting parents and medical professionals. Any errors in medications are promptly addressed and appropriate actions are taken to improve practice and keep children safe. Feedback from parents about the care provided to their children is very positive.

Staff respect children's views. They use visual aids and social stories to help children share their views and make choices, while increasing their level of understanding. Leaders and managers record all complaints and formally respond to them. They use complaints as a learning tool. This helps parents and children to feel heard and understand the actions taken to address their concerns.

Staff help children to understand what their care entails and set personalised targets to help them develop their independence skills. For example, children were observed cleaning and tidying up after their meals. Staff skilfully use pictures, gestures and verbal prompts to support communication. Staff understand children's needs well and celebrate all achievements however small.

The home is decorated with children's photographs, communication symbols and seasonal decorations. Children's bedrooms are personalised with bedding that they have chosen and staff encourage children to bring in items from home. Leaders and managers have completed significant repairs and redecoration in the home. However, more refurbishment is required to ensure that all areas of the home are decorated to provide a warm and comfortable environment for children.

Children's privacy is not always respected. Closed-circuit television (CCTV) has been installed in the hallways of the home. The purpose of this surveillance is not for the immediate safeguarding of children but to replay footage to observe past events when needed. This form of surveillance has been installed without adequate consideration of children's rights.

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

Staff interviewed showed appropriate understanding of whistle blowing policies and procedures. They have completed appropriate training including on safeguarding children with additional needs. Allegations or suspicion of harm are dealt with immediately by managers and shared with the relevant agencies. This increases children's safety in the home. Feedback from local authority designated officer is positive.

Staff maintain contact with children's families and call for updates prior to children attending for their short breaks. There is a strong emphasis on implementing preventative strategies and on liaising closely with schools and families to provide consistent care and support to children when they visit. As a result, children have positive experiences, including those children with the most significant needs. Physical intervention is very rarely used in this home.

Staff interviewed showed good understanding of children's needs. They manage incidents well and talk to children to help them understand their individual risks. Risk assessments are clear and detailed. They are informed by the children's professional networks to ensure that staff take the appropriate action when required. However, risk assessments for two children did not contain all known risks and this was addressed during the inspection.

Children's stays are well planned. Managers work well with children's network and placing authorities when new children are referred to the home. Detailed planning ensures that children enjoy each other's company and that there are no incidents of bullying. New children enjoy tea visits with their parents before they stay overnight, so they can familiarise themselves with their new environment and speak to members of staff. These visits also help managers to assess the suitability of care arrangements for new children. However, records do not demonstrate this well in the risk assessments that they complete for new children.

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

Leaders and managers do not have effective monitoring systems in place to review the safety of the home. For example, leaders and managers have not ensured that urgent actions identified from fire equipment maintenance tests, including fire alarms, emergency lights and an electrical installation condition report have been addressed promptly. The lack of management oversight compromises children's safety. However, leaders and managers took quick and effective action to address these concerns at the inspection.

The workforce development plan is not effective. It does not set out the arrangements for staff induction, probation, training, supervision and the process of managing and improving poor practice.

The manager and staff are strong advocates for children. They communicate effectively with the children's families and professional networks. Managers ensure that any decisions made in respect of children are planned, well thought out and in the children's best interests. For example, the manager challenged senior leaders when a new child admitted to the home had not accessed their education and appropriate support was put in place as a result.

Staff receive regular and effective supervision. Supervision focuses on the children's needs, experiences and plans. Safeguarding issues are discussed, as are staffs' development needs. The manager has introduced supervision for agency staff to ensure

that there is effective oversight of their practice. Staff are offered a range of online and in-person training. Specific training is arranged whenever children are admitted with complex health needs. Staff demonstrate appropriate knowledge and skills to meet children's needs.

The manager and staff know the children well and have high aspirations for them. They set and review individual achievable goals for each child when they visit for their short break and those who live at the home. Feedback from professionals and parents about the leaders and staff is very positive.

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>After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must—</p> <p>take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children’s home. (Regulation 25 (1)(a))</p> <p>In particular, leaders and managers must take prompt actions to address shortfalls identified in all scheduled maintenance checks for fire equipment’s including fire alarms, emergency lights and electrical installation condition reports.</p> <p>This requirement is restated.</p>	28 December 2024
<p>The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if—</p> <p>the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children;</p> <p>the child’s placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance;</p> <p>the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child’s need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(b)(d))</p> <p>In particular, leaders and managers must review the use of CCTV inside the home.</p>	30 January 2025
<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>	30 January 2025

promotes their welfare.

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—

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;

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)(h))

In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that they have effective systems to monitor and review the safety in the home and the care provided to children to enable them to take effective action to address shortfalls in practice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that in order for the home to be a nurturing and supportive environment they continue to repair all areas of the home’s interior including the children’s bedrooms. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan that can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child’s assessed needs as recorded in the child’s relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. In particular, this relates to managers evidencing how admission process and suitability of children is ascertained (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 56, paragraph 11.4)

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: SC457780

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Director of Children and Young People, London
Borough of Brent, 4th Floor, Civic Centre, Engineers' Way, Wembley, London HA9 0FJ

Responsible individual: Nigel Chapman

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Dorothy Thompstone, Social Care Inspector
Jo Tarbie, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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