

# 1230415

Registered provider: Beacon Child Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for four young people up to the age of 18. The home offers care for young people who have behavioural and/or emotional needs. The home is privately owned.

**Inspection dates:** 5 to 6 June 2017

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

**Date of last inspection:** 20 February 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Improved effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:**

Not applicable

## Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- The home remains in need of decoration.
- Employment checks are not always completed prior to staff commencing employment.
- Managers do not ensure that the home operates in accordance with the statement of purpose.
- Young people are not in full-time education or engaged in suitable structured activities that help to counter barriers to learning.
- Managers have not ensured that the safeguarding policy holds sufficient detail.
- Some young people's case records do not include copies of the placing authority's plans.
- Staff do not make sure that independent return home interviews are always available to young people who have been missing from care.
- Managers do not always make sure that serious safeguarding incidents are notified to local authorities and HMCI within 24 hours.
- Some staff members' supervisions remain infrequent.
- The manager has not developed a workforce plan.
- Managers do not always investigate complaints raised in young people's meetings.
- Staff do not have the necessary knowledge of the 'Prevent' duty and online safety to help young people to prepare for their future lives in society.

The children's home's strengths:

- Young people enjoy good relationships with staff.
- Young people's wishes and feelings are taken into account in the development of the home.
- Young people are encouraged and supported to develop their independence skills.

- Young people benefit from spending time with staff and having regular key working sessions.
- Staff prioritise young people's cultural needs and preferences.
- Young people's contact with their family is encouraged and supported.
- Young people are encouraged to understand and celebrate diversity.
- The staff make sure that young people have access to a range of health services that help to promote their physical and emotional well-being.

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
20/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
18/10/2016	Full	Requires improvement

## 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
In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard the registered person must ensure that staff ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (2)(c)(ii))	04/08/2017
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ('the statement of purpose') which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. This is with particular reference to clarity about whether it is intended that the home provides accommodation and support to children who may be at risk of child sexual exploitation. (Regulation 16 (1))	04/08/2017
The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home if full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (3)(d))	04/08/2017
After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home. This is with particular reference to ensuring that fire-resisting doors are only held open with an appropriate automatic door hold-open release device. (Regulation 25 (1)(a))	04/08/2017
The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development. This is in relation to training to raise awareness of equality and diversity, the 'Prevent' duty and online safety. (Regulation 33 (4)(a))	04/08/2017
The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	04/08/2017
The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular, provide for the prompt	04/08/2017

<p>referral of an allegation about current or ongoing abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the home is located and describe how and to whom staff are to report, without delay, any concern about abuse or neglect of a child. (Regulation 34 (2)(b)(f))</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))</p>	04/08/2017
<p>The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child that include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3. The records must be kept up to date, signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (a))</p>	04/08/2017

## Recommendations

- Ensure that staff provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming, supportive and which provides appropriate boundaries in relation to children's behaviour. Homes must also meet the children's basic day-to-day needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for and value them as an individual. This is with particular reference to establishing and maintaining clear and consistent daily routines. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
- Ensure that children are provided with appropriate furniture, such as a lockable cabinet or draws to securely store personal items, including any personal information. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.19)
- Ensure that where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff must work closely with the placing authority so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. If no education place is identified by the placing authority, the registered person must challenge them to meet the child's needs under Regulation 5 (engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- Ensure that the children's home works closely with the placing authority to

understand the child's relationship history and the impact that the child's arrival may have on the group living within the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 38, paragraph 8.3)

- Ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of the information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- Ensure that there is a workforce plan in place, which can fulfil the requirements of Regulation 16 Schedule 1. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- Ensure that there is a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. The system should cover the action that should be followed if the event arises at the weekend or on a public holiday. Notification must include details of the action taken by the home's staff in response to the event. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.5)

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good**

Since the last inspection, four new young people have moved into the home and one young person has moved out. Managers made insufficient enquiry with the placing authority prior to one young person's placement. This meant that the extent of the young person's needs were not clear. The absence of good matching affected the experiences and progress of the existing young people who were exposed to challenging behaviour, including attempts to set fires and aggression. A social worker told the inspector, 'The last placement had a really negative impact, which good matching could have avoided.'

Young people are building positive relationships with a stable and committed staff team. One young person told the inspector, 'Every member of staff is nice and relaxed. I can talk to all the staff.' Good staffing levels mean that young people benefit from regular individual support through key working sessions when young people can explore issues relevant to their individual situations. Colourful and detailed displays around the home created by the young people illustrate the support that they have to explore culture and heritage and celebrate diversity. During the inspection, one young person happily prepared and cooked oxtail and rice with support. The young person told the inspector, 'I am Jamaican heritage. They buy me my food. They are helping me with my cooking.' The focus on identity and independence helps young people to make progress with strengthening self-esteem and developing life skills in preparation for adulthood.

Young people have individualised residential placement plans and risk assessments. The placement plan supports young people to make some progress from their starting points. However, some young people's case records do not hold all of the required statutory documentation. This means that staff do not have the full details of young people's needs.

All young people receive a copy of the children's guide on admission to help them understand what happens in the home. However, in practice, the daily routines and expectations are not in keeping with the guide. For example, wake up times and bedtimes can vary. Treats are stored in the office to limit over consumption. Weekly activity planners are not completed in advance. This means that young people's days can lack structure. The lack of clarity and consistency with daily routines and expectations has on occasion contributed to disagreements between young people. Mixed messages about daily routines, expectations and responsibilities has an impact on the ability of young people to develop a sense of security and develop self-discipline.

None of the young people attend full-time education. One young person has the support of a tutor for a few hours a day and another young person is permanently excluded. One young person has been active in looking and applying for a college placement. Limited access to education combined with the absence of a planned, structured daily programme means that the young people do not benefit from support to help them move on to the next stage of their educational journey and overcome barriers to learning. This means that young people are not making the best progress that they can with their education.

Young people are encouraged and supported to attend routine appointments with dentists, doctors and opticians. Referrals for specialist services such as child and adolescent mental health services are a priority and contact is made with services such as Aquarius and sexual health services according to young people's needs. Young people are encouraged to take up activities outside of the home and all have enjoyed day trips to venues such as Cadbury World and Blackpool. This helps young people to have the help that they need to improve their emotional, physical and sexual health and well-being.

The staff recognise the importance of staying in touch with family and friends to enhancing the well-being of young people. Wherever possible, young people maintain contact with their friends and family. Staff accompany young people to visit their family when required and offer young people support afterwards. This helps young people to stay in contact with people who are important to them and supports them to understand their background and develop their sense of identity.

There has been some improvement to the physical conditions of the home, which has recently benefited from new carpet to the stairs and redecoration of the lounge. Young people have contributed ideas about how they want their home decorated. However, progress is slow, with improvement still needed to the dining area and in personalising young people's bedrooms. Young people do not have access to lockable storage to keep their personal and precious items safe. The delay in improving the condition of the home hampers young people from developing a true sense of security, belonging and ownership.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good**

Young people told the inspector that they felt safe and that they enjoyed the company of the staff. The young people like to spend time at the home and going missing from home episodes are now infrequent. Staff rarely use physical intervention and instead try to build supportive relationships that help young people to understand how to interact positively with others.

Staff encourage young people to express their views through weekly young people's meetings, key worker sessions and general conversation. Young people are able to voice their opinions and have influenced a variety of things, including the decor of the home, day trips, meals and their independence programmes. Staff ensure that every young person understands how to complain. A young person shared with the inspector that they would 'go to the manager or Ofsted' if they were concerned about anything. Young people have used the complaints procedure and had their concerns appropriately investigated. However, when young people raise complaints in young people's meetings, these concerns do not trigger the complaints procedure. This means that not all young people's concerns receive the same level of scrutiny.

Staff engage in training to help them fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities, including safeguarding, physical intervention and the administration of medication. Staff also have learning opportunities to help them understand the risks that young people can face from self-harm and child sexual exploitation. However, staff have not had the opportunity to

complete training in the areas of online safety and 'Prevent'. This means that staff are less informed about how to keep young people safe from the risks presented by social media and radicalisation.

Staff report that they feel confident about how to report safeguarding concerns. However, the home's safeguarding policy is not clear about the procedure for prompt referral of allegations of abuse to the child's placing authority, the police or Ofsted. This means that notifications do not always happen in a timely way. On one occasion when an allegation of abuse was made during a weekend, the staff team's lack of clarity meant that the local authority emergency duty team was not notified. This unnecessarily delayed the decision-making about investigation and support to the young person. Omissions in notifying leaves professionals without essential information to ensure that young people's safety is secure.

The registered manager has completed an assessment of the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the children's home and has shared it with the team so that staff are alert to risks posed in the local area. This helps staff to reduce the vulnerability of young people when accessing the local community.

The registered manager has failed to provide appropriate evidence to meet the requirement from the last inspection that there is appropriate vetting of staff prior to starting employment. This includes the manager failing to evidence full account for gaps in employment history and demonstrating in the records the reasons why a reference was not obtainable from a last employer. This compromises the organisation's recruitment procedures that promote the safety of the young people by preventing unsuitable adults from working with them.

Oversight from the registered manager of the general health and safety of the building helps to keep staff and young people safe. Regular safety checks are undertaken on gas, electrical and fire safety systems. On two occasions, young people have attempted to set a fire in the home. These incidents could have endangered the safety of staff and young people but were detected and reacted to quickly by the staff on duty. The registered manager was proactive in responding to these situations, promptly reviewing the fire precautions, making contact with the fire service for advice and addressing the dangers of fire setting with young people. This increased young people's understanding of the risk of fire, minimised the potential for further incidents and supported young people to remain safe in the home. However, despite there being clear guidance from the registered manager, during the inspection, fire doors were propped open with items of furniture leaving the safety of everyone using the building compromised.

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

The registered manager has been in post since August 2016. He is part way through completing his level 5 diploma in leadership and management. In addition to the manager, the home has nine members of staff. Three staff members are qualified to level 3 diploma in childcare or have a suitably equivalent qualification. The remaining six members of the team are undertaking the level 3 diploma with an anticipated completion date of June 2018, which is within the required time.

The registered manager develops and maintains relationships with key professionals including social workers and tutors. A social worker told the inspector, 'I have good communication with the manager. He keeps me informed.' However, the relationship with the police is limited and does not enhance the safety of, or support available to, the young people.

Staff speak highly of the registered manager. One member of the team told the inspector, 'I feel supported by the manager. He will always give me five minutes if I need it. He will take time and he will listen and advise.' However, the registered manager has failed to meet the requirement of the last inspection regarding staff support and supervision. Staff still do not receive regular, good-quality supervision. In addition, the manager has not yet developed a workforce plan. The lack of attention to ensuring the effective supervision of the workforce hinders the opportunity for staff to reflect on their practice and explore professional development.

The registered manager has reviewed the statement of purpose updating it to include the details, experience and qualifications of the team. However, it lacks sufficient clarity about whether the home provides accommodation and support to young people who may be at risk of child sexual exploitation. The lack of clarity in the statement of purpose, combined with limited information gathering about needs prior to admission, resulted in the placement of a young person who the home could not keep safe.

The registered manager has undertaken a review of the quality of care and has recently established an internal auditing system. However, the registered manager does not yet have a clear understanding of the strengths of the home and the areas for development. Sufficient action has not happened to satisfy previous inspection requirements and recommendations. These shortfalls continue to have an impact on young people's safety.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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:** 1230415

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

**Registered provider:** Beacon Child Care Limited

**Registered provider address:** Hazlewoods, Windsor House, Bayshill Road,  
Cheltenham GL50 3AT

**Responsible individual:** Matthew Fisher

**Registered manager:** Paul Sweeney

## Inspector

Alison Cooper: social care inspector

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