

1225887

Registered provider: Benecare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. Its statement of purpose specifies that it will provide care and accommodation for up to two children aged from eight to 18 years old who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 8 November 2019.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 May 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children are not protected and their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 29 August 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/08/2018	Full	Good
09/01/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/07/2017	Full	Good
18/10/2016	Interim	Sustained 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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets the children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare; treat each child with dignity and respect. <p>(Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(i)(ii)(iii))</p>	29/06/2019
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the 	29/06/2019

<p>competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; and that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(i)(ii)(iv)(v)(ix)(viii)(x)(xi)(b))</p>	
<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— 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies; that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. *(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iv)(v)(vi)(b)) [sections (2)(iii) & (vii) are not subject to compliance]</p>	<p>29/06/2019</p>
<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— 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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the</p>	<p>29/06/2019</p>

<p>home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f))</p>	
<p>The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. (Regulation 33 (1)(a))</p> <p>Specifically, new staff should receive a thorough induction, focusing on their role and responsibilities. In addition, all existing staff who are promoted or acting in another role should receive a full induction to their new role.</p>	<p>29/06/2019</p>

* This requirement is subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should have 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 14.13)
- The behaviour management strategy should be understood and applied at all times by staff and must be kept under review and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.34)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Children living here have experienced disrupted care delivered by an inconsistent team of staff. Staff do not all have the skills and knowledge to care for children effectively. Consequently, children have not been able to build secure and trusting relationships with familiar staff.

Staff do not understand how to manage the children's behaviour. Incidents have occurred that could have been avoided if staff had had the skills to recognise the children's needs and the ability to resolve conflict. Staff have not ensured that both children are given the time they need. On occasions, this has resulted in a child resorting to disruptive behaviour to gain staff attention. Staff have called the police when they have felt unable to control the situation. This is of serious concern given the young age of the children living at the home.

Some children's time at the home has ended in an unplanned way. The independent visitor reported that staff were unable to cope, but despite objectives being set, there is no evidence to show that progress was made in this area.

Staff have not demonstrated that they can deliver the home's objectives as outlined in the statement of purpose. They have not developed trusting relationships with children based on mutual respect. Staff have, on occasion, prioritised their own needs above those of the children. For example, a member of staff stopped to smoke a cigarette when out on a short walk with a child. The member of staff did not understand that this behaviour was unacceptable.

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

Significant shortfalls in the safeguarding culture at the home have resulted in the safety of children being seriously compromised.

A member of staff who witnessed a serious incident failed to immediately notify leaders and managers of the concerns about staff practice. There was confusion as to the nature of the incident when it was reported, and no action was taken until the child spoke to the registered manager some days later. Managers failed to report the incident to the designated officer for a further three days. The wider professional network was, therefore, prevented from being able to take action to safeguard the child. The alleged perpetrator continued to work in the home during the eight-day period between the incident and the report reaching the designated officer.

At the time of the inspection, two weeks after the incident had been reported, senior managers had not instigated an investigation into the delays and failures to report. The procedures in place to guide staff in reporting safeguarding matters introduced unnecessary delays and did not make clear individual staff members' roles and responsibilities in this area.

Staff showed poor judgement in respect of managing known risks for children. On one occasion, and despite the known risks of absconding and child sexual exploitation, staff stopped on the way home from collecting a missing child to buy food. This provided the child with the opportunity to go missing again.

Staffing levels are inadequate, which has resulted in unsafe lone working. On one occasion when a child was missing, neither her school nor her social worker could reach anyone in the organisation. The child's social worker had to recommence work that evening to collect the child herself and return her to the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The staff at this home, including the registered manager, said they feel unsupported by the organisation. Despite the registered manager being relatively new in post, her supervision has been infrequent and insufficient. She has not been provided with sufficient staff to manage the home safely.

Staff reported to the inspectors that the induction process is weak and that much of their training is online. Some staff members said that this has left them with unresolved questions. A manager was asked to hold an additional workshop for staff, on trauma, even though this manager had identified that they did not have the skills and knowledge to deliver the training.

Induction records sampled during the inspection indicate a lack of safeguarding focus. The organisation's own guidance requires staff to report concerns internally to a safeguarding manager before consulting with, or making a referral to, the designated officer. This is a barrier to allegations being reported in a timely manner.

Consequently, staff, including managers, are ill-equipped and unsure about their own safeguarding roles and responsibilities. This has resulted in unnecessary drift and inaction following a child's allegation. Such delays place children at risk of harm.

Visitors described the home as frequently poorly staffed. They reported meeting many different staff members, some of whom did not have sufficient knowledge of the children.

The current oversight by the registered manager and responsible individual is not effective in ensuring safe practice and good experiences for children using the service.

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: 1225887

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Benecare Limited

Registered provider address: 113a St Johns Hill, Sevenoaks TN13 3PE

Responsible individual: Stephen Richmond

Registered manager: Bethany Stone

Inspectors

Sarah Olliver, social care inspector

John Pledger, social care inspector

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