

# 1225887

Registered provider: Benecare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for children aged 8 to 18 years, who have social and emotional difficulties.

There has been no registered manager since 30 June 2019.

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.

Since the last inspection, there have been two children living in the home.

### Inspection dates: 16 and 17 November 2021

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>requires improvement to be good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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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:** 7 January 2020

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** not judged

**Enforcement action since last inspection:**

No additional enforcement action was taken following the most recent inspection. This was a monitoring visit, conducted on 11 November 2020. The compliance notice previously served under regulation 12 was judged as met and the provider was continuing to comply with the restriction of accommodation notice.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/01/2020	Interim	Not judged
10/09/2019	Full	Inadequate
21/05/2019	Full	Inadequate
29/08/2018	Full	Good

## Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection, one child has moved into the home from another of the provider's homes. This move was rushed and ill thought out. Leaders failed to consider and share information already known about the child. Therefore, the current staff team did not have thorough and relevant information to provide effective and supportive care during this move. Examples include the failure to share the child's care files and his individualised personal emergency evacuation plan, which prescribes the use of ear defenders when the fire alarm sounds.

Managers can demonstrate that the reason for the move was in the child's best interest and this is endorsed by the child's social worker. However, the process was undermined by poor communication and insufficient planning. The lack of attention to detail and the speed of the move failed to provide opportunities for the child to move into the home in a planned and considered way.

The experiences of children are mixed. For example, the staff are not always consistent in their approach to providing children with the care and guidance that they need to maintain optimum health. The staff do successfully work closely with relevant health professionals, but this is undermined by their approach to meeting the children's dietary needs. This is due to the children's choices that guide meal planning, often resulting in unhealthy foods and eating habits. Consequently, the staff's well-intentioned practice of giving children choices is not being balanced by an educative approach.

Since the last inspection, numerous staffing changes, including a change of manager, have resulted in an inconsistent staff team. This hinders the children's ability to form reliable, trusting relationships with their carers. More recently, however, the team is stabilising and, for the child who has recently moved in, familiar staff from his previous home are working at this home to support him to settle.

The educational needs of the children are advocated and supported by the staff. The child that has recently moved on benefited from an individualised education package that met her needs. Although mainstream provision was not available for this child, the staff worked with education professionals to provide her with the best support possible.

This child successfully moved out of the home in a planned way. Effective key working and staff support provided a safe platform for her to begin to explore previous experiences and make sense of these. Staff worked closely with the child's family, providing appropriate support to the child and family members to rebuild their relationships. This resulted in a successful return to her family.

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

Although suitable safeguarding training is provided by the organisation, a consistently strong safeguarding culture is not yet embedded. Staff are able to respond immediately to significant incidents, but beyond this, their awareness and understanding of their wider safeguarding responsibilities, and the processes that go with these, are inconsistent. Managers are missing opportunities, such as staff supervisions and team meetings, to guide and support the team to provide consistently safe and well-informed care for the children.

Risk management practice is varied. The quality of the impact and matching processes for the child moving into the home was poor. Staff were not provided with information about the child's known risks, due to this information not being shared by the staff from the child's previous home. Information, such as a risk assessment and location risk information from the child's previous home, has not been reviewed or adapted to his current environment and this reduces the relevance and accuracy of this information. Therefore, risk assessments are not individualised to the child's current needs and circumstances. Consequently, staff are not provided with information to manage risk safely.

In another example, the child who has recently moved on did have clear and informative risk assessments. Staff speak knowledgeably of the child and how they supported her. Records demonstrate that clear review and monitoring practice was regularly undertaken, and this allowed staff to support appropriate risk-taking in a managed and safe way.

Children do not go missing from home. There are clear plans in place for the staff to follow in the event that this could occur. Staff are proactive in helping the children to understand the dangers that they may face when they are in the community and this encourages the children to start to think for themselves.

Although the home provides spacious and comfortable accommodation, health and safety reporting and maintenance management are not consistent. Some aspects have taken beyond a reasonable amount of time to replace or repair, such as refitting a wardrobe door and repairing the perimeter fencing.

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

The home has not had a registered manager since June 2019. Despite the organisation making appointments to this post, none have reached the conclusion of being registered with Ofsted. This has left the home without a skilled and experienced manager, which has a significant impact on the day-to-day management of the staff and providing effective leadership. The newly appointed manager has submitted their application to be registered. Her ability to manage and lead effectively is yet to be measured by Ofsted's fit person process.

The responsible individual has failed to provide the necessary level of support and guidance for the new manager. Despite her being in post for six weeks, there is extremely limited information available to support confirmation that a qualitative and appropriate period of induction has been provided. This is exacerbated by the wider and broader organisation-wide commitments of the responsible individual, which questions her capacity to provide effective supervision and monitoring of the management of the home.

Staff supervision is sporadic and inconsistent. Records do not demonstrate how the manager is making sure that all staff know how to safely meet children's needs in line with their care plans and risk assessments, and staff are not supported to routinely explore their safeguarding practice within supervision. Consequently, staff are not given the opportunity to reflect on their practice and develop their skills and knowledge.

The irregularity of staff meetings compromises the staff team's ability to reflect on and review significant events. This is particularly relevant and necessary during challenging periods and times of change. Poor communication, both verbal and written, has a negative impact on embedding an open and transparent culture.

Leaders and managers are not monitoring the home adequately. The manager does not have effective oversight. In particular, the team's knowledge of children's information and current risks are not being reviewed with sufficient scrutiny, so as to provide a safe environment. This is compounded by a similar practice with regard to the employment of staff. Although checks and references are routinely undertaken, there is a lack of rigour in terms of exploring an applicant's safeguarding knowledge through the interview process, as well as a lack of exploration of suitability for the role when verifying references.

The use of the home's outbuildings to store paper records relating to children who have left the home demonstrates the failure of leaders to adequately store and protect sensitive and confidential information. Furthermore, this arrangement presents a potential fire risk.

## 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>A responsible individual must—</p> <p>have the capacity, experience and skills to supervise the management of the home, or the homes, in respect of which the responsible individual is nominated. (Regulation 26 (7)(b))</p>	31 January 2022
<p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—</p> <p>are kept in a secure place after the child has ceased to be accommodated in the home. (Regulation 36 (2)(d))</p> <p>In particular, all archived records are to be stored in a facility that is safe and secure, and ensures that confidentiality is maintained.</p>	31 January 2022
<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>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; and</p> <p>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; and</p>	31 January 2022

<p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(b)(d))</p>	
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## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to help children understand, and where necessary work to change negative behaviours in key areas of health and well-being such as, but not limited to, nutrition and healthy diet. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18)
- As set out in regulations 31–33, the registered person must ensure that the recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

## 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:** 1225887

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

**Registered provider:** Benecare Limited

**Registered provider address:** The Thatch Vine Farm, Stockers Hill, Boughton-under-Blean, Faversham, Kent ME13 9AB

**Responsible individual:** Lauren Walczak

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Rebecca Fisher, Social Care Inspector

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