

1236832

Registered provider: Benjamin UK Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home offers therapeutic support, education and care for up to four children who may have experienced neglect, abuse or trauma that has left them vulnerable.

Education is offered at a linked provision on a different site. The inspector only inspected the social care provision at this site.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 4 June 2024. He is currently working towards a relevant level 5 qualification.

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 June 2024

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: 5 March 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2024	Full	Good
26/04/2022	Full	Good
05/01/2022	Full	Good
24/09/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

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

Two children were living at the home at the time of the inspection. Only one child was spoken with, as the other child was in hospital. Since the last inspection, children living at this home have been involved in frequent and escalating incidents. This has led to staff being injured and allegations against staff. Management oversight has been limited and inconsistent. Professionals such as the independent person and the local authority designated officer (LADO) have raised concerns about the level of support available to staff and children during incidents. However, they have agreed that the manager's response to incidents has prevented any widespread failures.

Staff generally speak warmly about the children they care for. However, at times staff spoke of children 'absconding'. Staff's risk assessments use this language. One staff member spoke of children 'having too many rights'. This is not in line with the home's therapeutic and trauma-informed ethos.

The home is well decorated and homely. Some areas of the house have been damaged due to recent incidents. The manager has made sure that repairs are carried out quickly.

Two children have moved into the home and two have moved out since the last inspection. Moves are generally well considered. The manager has made efforts to maintain a relationship with both children who have moved out. One child's social worker said that this was important to their child being able to look back on their time at the home without feeling blamed.

Staff meet children's health needs. They support children to attend health appointments.

The staff support children well with their education. They work closely with the linked school. They tailor children's education to their needs. This supports children's sense of achievement and resilience.

Staff liaise with the linked school to plan activities that reflect the children's hobbies and interests. This helps staff to build relationships with children which are meaningful.

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

The manager has failed to notify Ofsted of three serious incidents. He has also failed to act on two allegations, one during which a child alleged that a member of

staff had hurt them and another when a child raised concerns about their safety at the home.

Staff have hidden in bedrooms during incidents. They have failed to provide a secure base and consistent safety for children. This is not in line with the home's statement of purpose and does not support staff to work in a trauma-informed manner.

Staff have not always been supported to build effective relationships with the police. This has led to the police being called to manage incidents at crisis points. This does not evidence that staff have supported children to learn about the consequences of behaviour without the risk of being criminalised.

The manager has failed to review staff's practice of storing all cutlery and some food items in the staff office after incidents. This does not help children to understand and manage risk.

Professionals' feedback is mixed in respect of children's safety. One child's independent reviewing officer shared concerns that their child is no safer since living at the home. However, another child's social worker said that the staff have supported their child well. They said that staff have helped their child to stay as safe as possible given the child's vulnerabilities.

Staff generally have a good understanding of the risks that they need to manage for each child and the actions that they should take to keep children safe. When children have set light to items at the home, staff have responded well. They invited the fire brigade to speak with the children at children's meetings.

Staff are proactive when children go missing from the home. Staff search for children and advocate for them to receive return home interviews.

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

The manager has failed to provide consistent oversight of staff's practice and children's care since the last inspection. He said that he feels overwhelmed at times by the high level of incidents. He has not been able to complete all the required records. Senior managers have offered the manager well-being support and support through agreed action plans following incidents. However, this has not been sufficient to mitigate the shortfalls in the management oversight.

At times, children have used cannabis at the home. The manager has failed to notify Ofsted of two serious incidents involving a child making cannabis tea while the other children were in bed and staff were unaware on one occasion.

Two staff have not achieved a relevant level 3 qualification within the required timescales.

Staff understand the risks present in the community. The manager identifies local risks and consults with services local to the home to reduce these risks. The manager is developing his awareness of the home's strengths and areas for improvement. However, he has not completed a quality of care review since the last inspection. This requirement is restated.

The manager ensures that staff are suitable by following safer recruitment processes. He takes steps to ensure that there are sufficient skilled staff supporting the children.

Staff say that the manager is approachable and available. They enjoy working for him and say that he has helped them to work together as a team better. The staff say that their supervision sessions have helped them to reflect on their practice.

Professionals, such as one child's social worker, say that the manager is good at communicating with them. They also say that he is warm and available to their child.

Senior managers have liaised effectively with professionals such as the LADO after the recent escalation in incidents. During the inspection, senior managers were able to agree a plan to address the identified shortfalls.

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 that staff—</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(vi))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that allegations against staff are responded to and shared with the appropriate agencies such as the LADO.</p>	<p>30 August 2024</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—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential;</p> <p>and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on feedback on—</p> <p>the experiences of children, including complaints received;</p>	<p>1 October 2024</p>

<p>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)(f)(g)(ii)(h))</p>	
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)(e))</p>	<p>2 August 2024</p>
<p>For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—</p> <p>the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) (“the Level 3 Diploma”); or</p> <p>a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.</p> <p>The relevant date is—</p> <p>in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a))</p>	<p>4 October 2024</p>
<p>The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children (“a quality of care review”) at least once every 6 months.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children’s home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it;</p>	<p>7 October 2024</p>

any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.

After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report").

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.
(Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (5))

This requirement was raised at the last full inspection and is restated.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that records relating to children are written in child-friendly language and that the language used to describe children is appropriate. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, 14.4)

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: 1236832

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Benjamin UK Ltd

Registered provider address: Coach House, White House Court, Hockliffe Street,
Leighton Buzzard LU7 1FD

Responsible individual: Claudette Rudman

Registered manager: Aris Papadopoulos

Inspector

Majella Russell, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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