

1230415

Registered provider: Beacon Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and is registered to provide care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties. At the time of this inspection, three children were living in the home. All children were spoken with during the inspection.

A suitably qualified and experienced manager is in post.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 July 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: 3 January 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 03/01/2024 | Full | Good |
| 22/02/2023 | Full | Good |
| 17/11/2021 | Full | Good |
| 03/03/2020 | Interim | Sustained effectiveness |

Inspection judgements

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

Children say they like living at the home. One child said, 'It's good here, I like it.' Staff have a good understanding of children's lived experiences, and positive behaviour is encouraged through rewards and praise. As a result, children are more accepting of boundaries, and daily routines are embedded. However, recently, there has been some disruption in the home and expected standards have declined. This impacts on children's overall experiences and means that children's care is not always good.

Children's moves into the home are not consistently well planned. When one child moved in, the manager had not gathered enough information about the child's vulnerabilities to ensure that the staff could meet their needs and keep them safe. As a result, the child moved on after six weeks.

Children's access to the lounge is unnecessarily restricted at certain times of the day because the door is kept locked. There are no assessments to justify this restriction to ensure that it is necessary and proportionate to keep children safe. The manager has taken action to address this poor practice. Also, some of the children's food items are kept in the staff office, and other food items, such as chocolate and crisps, are not purchased for children to enjoy. This is not a personalised approach to children's individual needs. Furthermore, their views about this decision have not been considered.

While the home environment is clean, multiple areas are not welcoming and need attention to ensure that the home is a nice place for children to live. The rear garden is untidy and poorly maintained. Discarded items, including two cleaning mops, cooking pans and cutlery, are located on the kitchen roof. Some furniture is in poor condition. The handles are missing on a child's chest of drawers, and the seat pad on a sofa in the lounge is ripped. This detracts from a nurturing environment that children can be proud of. The manager gave assurances that improvements are planned.

Staff encourage children to develop their life skills to prepare them for adulthood. These skills include cooking meals, washing laundry and travelling independently. This gives children confidence in their abilities and a sense of pride in their achievements.

Hobbies and interests that children enjoy are encouraged. One child said they enjoy going swimming and using their scooter at a local skate park. This increases children's sense of self-worth.

Staff understand the children's individual healthcare needs and support them sensitively with their health and well-being. However, a child's parent said they felt that staff could do more to encourage their child to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Children attend health appointments to make sure that they remain healthy.

Staff promote the importance of children's education. The manager advocates for children's individual educational needs to ensure that they are met. Staff understand barriers to learning and support children to explore their interests. For example, a college course has been sourced for a child who is interested in pursuing a future career in mechanics.

Relationships between children in the home have been mixed. On occasions, incidents between children have occurred. Direct work with children is carried out to support them to understand how their behaviour can impact on others and to help them to develop socially acceptable behaviour.

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

Children know how to make a complaint. Their complaints and the disclosures they make about staff are listened to and taken seriously. While prompt action is taken to protect children, the poor conduct of some staff, who no longer work at the home, has resulted in children feeling upset and intimidated. This does not provide children with a sense of safety or security. One child said, 'It's better now as some staff have gone.'

Staff are knowledgeable about children's risks and vulnerabilities. However, some of the children's risk assessments and plans lack necessary detail and contain inaccurate and out-of-date information. For example, a risk assessment did not inform staff of all the risks associated with the child's behaviour. This limits their ability to safeguard the child from harm. This issue was raised as a requirement at the last inspection and is restated.

Restraint practice used in the home is not always necessary. On one occasion, a child took the keys to the home's car. The child was held by staff as they attempted to retrieve the keys. The manager reviewed the incident but did not identify that this response was not proportionate to the level of risk posed.

Staff have important discussions with children to help them understand risks including online safety and relationships. Staff use key-work sessions effectively to encourage children to make safe life choices.

The number of times children have gone missing from home has increased since the last inspection. When this happens, staff respond in a well-coordinated way, and children return home safely. Following their return, staff work with children to reinforce that they have people in their lives who care about them and want to keep them safe.

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

The manager is experienced and has high aspirations for children. She is reflective and has found the last six months challenging. The manager understands the strengths and some of the areas needing further development at the home.

Monitoring systems in place to ensure that children receive safe, good-quality care are not always effective. The systems and tools used have failed to identify all the shortfalls and poor practice issues identified during this inspection. This is a missed opportunity to make improvements to benefit children. This issue was raised as a requirement at the last inspection and is restated. In addition, some information requested during the inspection was not provided. A new audit tool has been introduced and the manager gave assurance the new tool will improve her oversight.

There have been some staffing changes at the home since the last inspection. Some staff from other homes, bank staff and agency staff are providing care to children. While those staff know the children, the manager has identified staffing as a key priority to ensure that children receive care from a consistent staff team. Recruitment of permanent staff is ongoing.

Leaders do not ensure that Ofsted is notified of all significant events that occur in the home, such as when children make disclosures about staff conduct. This compromises external oversight of safeguarding practices in the home.

Staff say they are happy working at the home, and they feel supported by their manager. New staff receive an induction and a range of training to help them to meet children's needs. However, not all staff training is up to date. Therefore, the manager cannot be assured that staff have all the skills and knowledge they need to care for children well.

The quality of staff supervision has improved since the last inspection. Regular reflective supervision supports staff practice and development. This is a positive area of practice. Staff also have opportunities to attend monthly team meetings to talk about the children and share ideas.

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—</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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that children’s risk assessments contain sufficient, accurate and up-to-date information to enable staff to understand and manage risks effectively.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</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; and</p> <p>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>30 August 2024</p> |

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| <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications, and skills to meet the needs of each child; and</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)(c)(h))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff receive all the training that they need to care for children. They must also have effective oversight of the home to improve the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>This requirement was made at the last inspection and is restated.</p> | |
| <p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home’s statement of purpose;</p> <p>that each child’s relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that they obtain sufficient information about a child’s vulnerabilities before they move into the home, to ensure that their needs can be met.</p> | 30 August 2024 |
| <p>Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing—</p> <p>injury to any person (including the child);</p> <p>serious damage to the property of any person (including the child); or</p> | 30 August 2024 |

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| <p>a child who is accommodated in a secure children’s home from absconding from the home.</p> <p>Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that the use of restraint in relation to a child is necessary and proportionate.</p> | |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>the privacy of children is appropriately protected;</p> <p>children can access all appropriate areas of the children’s home’s premises; and</p> <p>any limitation placed on a child’s privacy or access to any area of the home’s premises—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home;</p> <p>is necessary and proportionate;</p> <p>is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and</p> <p>allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))</p> <p>This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that children can access all areas of their home freely unless there is a reason their freedom must be restricted to keep them safe.</p> | <p>30 August 2024</p> |
| <p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; or</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(c)(e))</p> | <p>30 August 2024</p> |

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| <p>In particular, the registered person must ensure that all serious events are promptly notified to HMCI, including when there is an allegation of abuse made about a person working at the home.</p> | |
| <p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>protect and promote each child’s welfare;</p> <p>provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking account of the child’s background;</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child; and</p> <p>enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(ii)(iv)(c)(i)(ii))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring that the home is a nice place for children to live. In particular, furniture must be in good condition and the rear garden must be tidy and well maintained. In addition, the discarded household items must be removed from the kitchen roof.</p> | <p>30 August 2024</p> |

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: 1230415

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Beacon Childcare Limited

Registered provider address: Beacon Childcare Limited, 28 Phoenix Business Park, Avenue Close, Birmingham B7 4NU

Responsible individual: Sophie Nicholls

Registered manager: Ionna Thompson

Inspector

Amy Richards, Social Care Inspector

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