

2755786

Registered provider: The Beeches UK limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager was present for this inspection. They are in the process of applying to register with Ofsted.

Three children live in the home and their views have contributed to this inspection.

Inspection date: 2 October 2024

Date of last inspection: 7 May 2024

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At these inspections, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

The care of children

Since the previous inspection one child has moved out and two children have moved into the home. Transitions in and out of the home have been positive and well-planned. Children spoken to said they were OK and had no worries or concerns.

Children are starting to make progress and it is positive that two of the children now attend school full time. Staff are supporting one child to access a college course and the manager is working pro-actively within a multi-disciplinary team to support the child. Children have positive and nurturing relationships with the staff, and this has helped them to be more settled and secure in the home.

Children have opportunities to engage in activities in the home and community, and they have enjoyed a summer break. For one child, this was the first holiday they have ever had, and this was a positive experience for them.

Staff help children to remain in touch with those who are important to them, and their views and wishes have been considered when planning family time. This has supported children to maintain these relationships and reduced some of their anxieties around this.

Staff help children to develop their social skills and they are helping them to learn how to make friends. There have been some incidents of peer-on-peer abuse and bullying type behaviour, but staff are not supporting children to understand the impact of this on others or how to respond more appropriately towards each other.

Staff meet children's health needs well. All children are registered with local health services, including dentists. Additional support for their emotional health and well-being is being sought through external agencies. The team has monthly meetings to discuss the children with the home's therapist. The therapist provides staff with additional guidance on how best to support the children.

The safety of children

Children's risk assessments do not consistently record all known risks and do not provide staff with guidance on how best to manage these. Some risks have not been clearly identified and considered, and this prevents staff from understanding what action they may need to take in response. For example, the risk of using a ligature has not been included in a risk assessment despite this being a known concern. There have been incidents of peer-on-peer abuse and bullying between children, and risk assessments do not adequately address the impact of this on children, or

how to educate them to try and minimise further occurrences. This could place children at risk of harm.

Incidents, including those requiring the use of restraint, have started to reduce as staff help children to discuss their worries. Children are starting to learn more effective ways of expressing their emotions. Children's support plans do not clearly identify why staff use particular restraints or whether staff should consider using less restrictive holds. This means staff are always using the same techniques without a clear rationale for doing this.

Missing-from-care incidents and concerns around substance misuse have significantly reduced, and this is positive progress for the child involved. Staff are developing more understanding and awareness of how best to support children in crisis and have become more confident in managing behaviour that may challenge.

Allegations about staff and historical disclosures have been well managed, and the manager is working effectively with external professionals to ensure that appropriate action is taken in response. On one occasion, a staff member failed to identify and report a potential safeguarding concern relating to a restraint that happened in school, and the child's account of this. The manager had not had oversight of this debrief, which meant the manager could not respond to it. The manager took steps to address this with the relevant professionals during the inspection.

There has been a reduction in the use of negative consequences, such as sanctions, in response to incidents. Staff are using more nurturing ways of promoting positive behaviour and rewarding children for this. Staff are still using sanctions when children return from missing-from-home incidents, which is punishing children rather than trying to understand their reasons for going missing in the first place. This does not provide children with a nurturing response following incidents of going missing and absence.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The manager has applied to register with Ofsted, and senior leaders and the manager are supporting them well.

Management oversight has improved. New systems and processes are supporting the manager with auditing and quality assurance in the home. The manager has implemented a development plan which identifies the areas for further development and improvement. They have focused on upskilling and developing the team to provide better structure, boundaries and routines. This has helped children to feel more secure, and children have started to settle and make progress.

The manager role models child-centred care to the team and is creating a culture around positive relationships and nurture. Staff spoken to said that they feel well-supported and that they have respect for their manager. Staff spoke positively about the changes that the manager has implemented and the positive impact these have had for the staff and children.

Staff training has improved with more training being completed face-to-face. The manager has sourced external professionals to come to the home to deliver further training, such as relating to missing from care. The manager is supporting staff to undertake the required childcare qualification, and the manager has appointed a training coordinator to further support staff with their training needs.

Staff are receiving regular and reflective supervisions, and the manager has completed personal development plans with all team members. Staff and managers are doing additional skills analysis through quizzes and discussions to identify any shortfalls in staff knowledge. The manager is then providing additional support and guidance to address and identify areas. This has helped staff to develop more awareness of their roles and in developing confidence to manage some behaviour that may challenge.

Transitions into and out of the home have been well managed. The manager has completed a comprehensive matching and impact assessment to ensure the home can meet the needs of new children, and how this may impact on other children and the team. One child who moved out of the home has stayed in touch and has asked if they can meet up with the manager and staff.

The manager has taken steps to address the requirements from the last inspection and to make the necessary improvements to the care being provided at the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/05/2024	Full	requires improvement to be good

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;</p> <p>help each child understand how to keep safe; and</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii))</p> <p>In particular, this relates to the manager regularly reviewing and updating risk assessments to ensure that they accurately reflect children’s needs and known risks.</p>	<p>1 Dec 2024</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person must ensure that any sanctions used should be restorative and appropriate and not used as a consequence when children go missing from care. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’; page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- The registered person must ensure that staff understand what they must do to prevent bullying and that they should be able to recognise and address different types of abuse such as peer abuse and bullying in day-to-day relationships in the home. Staff should have the skills to intervene, protect and address bullying including completing targeted work with children. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 39, paragraph 8.16)

- The registered person must ensure that the use of restraint takes into consideration the size and age of the child whenever used. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 48, paragraph 9.53)
- The registered person must ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to recognise any signs that a child is in any way at risk of harm, including children's views when debriefing from incidents. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12).

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2755786

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Beeches UK limited

Registered provider address: SBCH House, 212 Ballards Lane, London N3 2LX

Responsible individual: Michelle Robinson

Registered manager: Position vacant

Inspector

Sarah Orriss, Social Care Inspector

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