

1250035

Registered provider: Building Bridges Care Homes Ltd

Full 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 four children who may be experiencing social and/or emotional issues. The home is privately owned and managed.

The registered manager post is vacant.

At the time of inspection, there were two children living in the home, both of whom were spoken to as part of the inspection.

This inspection was scheduled to consider the progress made in addressing the serious and widespread concerns identified at the inspection carried out on 24 April 2024.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 August 2024

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 widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded. The care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 24 April 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

A case review was held following the last inspection to consider the concerns raised. Ofsted then issued a compliance notice under Section 22A of the Care Standards Act 2000, in relation to regulation 13 (the leadership and management standard) of The Children's Homes Regulations 2015.

Ofsted carried out a monitoring visit on 18 June 2024 and found that steps had been taken to address some of the shortfalls identified at the last inspection. The provider also planned to continue working towards an improvement plan.

Following this visit, a case review was held which considered the provider's actions to meet the compliance notice. It was concluded that sufficient progress had been made to meet the steps of the notice.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/04/2024	Full	Inadequate
30/08/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
23/05/2023	Full	Inadequate
14/02/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Two children were living in the home at the time of the inspection. One child had moved out of the home the day before the inspection due to poorly managed bullying incidents.

Staff have failed to implement effective boundaries, routines and structures. Children regularly stay awake through the night and sleep late into the afternoon. Poor and inconsistent routines have an impact on children's well-being and limit the progress they can make.

Children do not have fun. They spend extensive periods of time in their bedrooms, including eating their meals. Children are also not being provided with regular and age-appropriate activities. They are not being supported to develop important social skills.

Staff do not have good enough oversight of children's daily experiences. One child's room was unhygienic and had a strong odour due to the presence of wet cat food. Staff knew about this but had not taken any action.

Children are not being supported to enjoy sustained achievement in education or training. Concerns had arisen about the children's engagement with education towards the end of the summer term. Staff had no clear plans to help children successfully return to school after the holidays. One child was telling staff and family members that they were not intending to go back to school, but staff were not taking this into account. Children are not being supported to access formal education.

Children do not have a good experience of moving out of this home. Children have moved out in a poorly planned, last-minute way. This has caused them unnecessary anxiety and distress. Staff do not protect children's emotional well-being or set children up for success in the next stage of their lives.

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

Staff do not have the knowledge or skills to safeguard children. In this inspection period, four children have said they feel unsafe and/or unhappy. This has led to children leaving the home and refusing to return. As a result, two children's placements have ended in an unplanned way. Children do not have confidence that staff will protect them from harm.

Bullying incidents are poorly managed. Staff do not have clear guidance or the skills to safely manage children's relationships. Leaders and managers have not demonstrated important learning from repeated bullying incidents. Records show that unmanaged bullying has been a long-standing concern in this home. Children have experienced physical and verbal abuse.

Risk assessments are poor. Safety plans regarding peer relationships are impractical and punitive, relying heavily on constant supervision. A local authority team manager said this approach 'felt like secure accommodation'.

Staff do not always follow safety plans. This has led to incidents of hitting, kicking and, on one occasion, inappropriate touching. One professional said, 'Staff didn't understand or empathise with his [a child's] worries.' Children are not kept safe.

Staff do not have good oversight of children's use of technology. One child is on their mobile phone throughout the night. Staff did not know how to manage this risk effectively.

Children have been sharing bedrooms at night. Their plans were not updated to give staff guidance on how to manage this issue. Children are being exposed to unnecessary risk.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leadership and management arrangements are ineffective. There has been no registered manager at the home since October 2023 and there have been multiple changes in the management of the home since then. The acting manager was not present during the inspection due to an allegation having been made against them. Children say these changes are unsettling.

Monitoring of the home is ineffective. Potential risks are not identified or addressed. The acting manager has not been able to be in day-to-day charge of the home. Leaders and managers do not understand children's experiences of living in this home.

Leaders and managers do not consistently identify or address shortfalls in staff practice. When issues are recognised, managers do not address concerns quickly or thoroughly. Managers do not ensure that children are receiving good-quality care.

Leaders and managers have a limited understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. They have not addressed long-standing shortfalls in practice. Children do not receive good enough care.

The supervision of staff is inconsistent, with some not receiving regular oversight. The quality of the records of supervision meetings also varies, with some being brief and lacking in detail. Formal oversight of staff practice is ineffective.

Leaders and managers do not take children's complaints seriously. Children have told managers that they are unhappy and feel threatened or unsafe. Leaders and managers have not taken effective steps to address these concerns. Staff dismissed one child's concerns about being physically assaulted by a peer, saying it was 'play fighting'. One child who left the home told his social worker that they felt staff did not care about him. Children do not feel respected or listened to.

As a result of the concerns arising from this inspection and the provider's long-standing poor inspection profile, Ofsted took the decision at a case review on 21 August 2024 to suspend the provider's registration, under section 20B of the Care Standards Act 2000.

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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vii)) In particular, the registered person must make sure that staff share information about emerging risks for children with the team and other professionals. Also, that children are properly supervised and supported in the home, to prevent conflict between them.	17 October 2024

Specifically, the registered manager must make sure that all staff, including leaders and managers, understand the home's safeguarding policies and procedures. This requirement is restated from the last inspection.	
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. 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 home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and 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)(e)(f)(g)(ii)(h)) Specifically, the registered person must have the skills, knowledge and experience to understand the needs of the children being cared for and to lead staff to provide good-quality care.	17 October 2024

The registered person must ensure adequate oversight of care in the home, including of significant incidents, and ensure appropriate information-sharing with all partner agencies. The registered person must ensure that robust monitoring systems are being used effectively to give the manager useful oversight and review of plans, assessments and records relating to the children. The registered person must ensure that all children's feedback is taken seriously and used to inform care planning. This requirement is restated from the last inspection.	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— 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; that each child's relevant plans are followed; that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if— the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs; the child requests a review of the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(i)(iii)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that children have positive daily routines and structures. This requirement is restated from the last inspection.	17 October 2024

The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child’s education and training targets, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans; support each child’s learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; maintain regular contact with each child’s education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child’s education and training and to maximise the child’s achievement; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child’s relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(viii)(ix)(x)) This requirement is restated from the last inspection.	17 October 2024
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The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— 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; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; 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 competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(viii)(ix)(xi)(b)) This requirement is restated from the last inspection.	17 October 2024
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child’s placing authority effectively in the child’s care, in accordance with the child’s relevant plans;	17 October 2024

if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans; and seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (a)(c)(d)) In particular, the registered person must make sure that there is sufficient communication with and challenge to children's placing authorities when care planning is unclear or does not meet children's needs.	
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— 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 children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; 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; help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult; (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi))	17 October 2024

In particular, the registered person must make sure that staff understand the standard of care set out in the home's statement of purpose. They must make sure that staff have the skills and knowledge to deliver care which meets this standard.

In addition, the registered person must make sure that children are properly prepared and supported to move on from the home.

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: 1250035

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Building Bridges Care Homes Ltd

Registered provider address: Mill Farm, Bull Bridge Lane, Liverpool L10 6LZ

Responsible individual: Peter Barron

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Nicola Shaw, Social Care Inspector

Paulette Forbes, Social Care Inspector

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